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# A Survey of Islamic Culture and Institutions

K. D. BHARGAVA

*Director, National Archives, New Delhi*

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## PREFACE

This book aims at a popular exposition of the main currents of culture, which have moulded the mind and heart of Muslims, for the general reader. Important aspects of Islamic culture have been included in the book and copious illustrations from the classics have been given to convey to the reader some idea of the wealth of the materials available.

The manuscript of this book was prepared by me in collaboration with the late Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan, sometime Member for Education and Arts in the Government of India. It has now been revised and brought up-to-date. Muslim Culture as described here falls into two categories: (1) the Culture and Institutions which developed in Islamic countries and (2) Muslim Culture in India. Of the former it is sufficient to state that the scope of the subject is so vast that no attempt has been made to give a complete account. I have, therefore, contented myself with a sketch of the political and economic institutions of the Caliphate and have discussed some of the main stages in the growth of Muslim Culture and Administration. The history of Islamic philosophy, the development of architecture and the growth of scientific investigation have been analysed in various sections. A brief account of Muslim Spain together with a detailed account of Cordova and the Alhambra has been given. I have also given some account of Baghdad and a few other Muslim cities.

An exceedingly brief account has been given of Muslim Culture in India. The labours of a devoted band of Indian and English scholars have yielded rich fruit and have thrown considerable light on the part it played in building up our national culture.

For a work of this nature numerous works had to be consulted and utilised. A reference to the foot-notes will show my obligations to numerous writers, a list of whose works has been given in the bibliography at the end of the book.

It is my pleasant duty to express my thanks to Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London, for permission to quote from Khuda Bukhsh's *Studies, Indian and Islamic*; to Mr. A. C. Calvert to quote from *Alhambra* and to M/s. Ernest Benn Ltd., London, for permission to cite extracts from Nicholson's *Literary History of the Arabs* and Browne's *A Literary History of Persia*. I am also grateful to M/s. Chatto & Windus, for permission to include extracts from Dozy's *Spanish Islam*, and to M/s. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., London for permitting me to quote from Macdonald's *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory*. Messrs. Luzac and Co., and Clarendon Press, Oxford, have very kindly agreed to the inclusion

in this book of extracts from *Umayyads and Abbasids* and Le Strange's *Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate*. Last, but not least, I have to thank the authorities of the Calcutta University for permission to quote from "Orient under the Caliphs", by Khuda Bakhsh.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my sense of gratitude to Mr. S. K. Aggarwal of M/s. Kitab Mahal for agreeing to undertake the publication of this book and for bringing it out in a short time.

New Delhi,  
19th June, 1960

K. D. BHARGAVA

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## CHAPTER I

### ORIGINS OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

From the eleventh century down to the eighteenth a succession of Muslim rulers invaded India, and injected into her elements of virility and energy which were expressed in new principles of administration, in a restatement of the canons of taste, in the growth of intellectual comprehension of India's problems and in the inner and ultimate determination of India to fully associate Hindu and Muslim energies with the task of nation-building on the cultural and economic plane. The synthesis of the two cultures took time, but the assimilative power of India succeeded in fusing the cultures into a unity, in important stages of our national development. Muslim culture did not submerge the individuality of ancient or medieval culture for it was itself the product of assimilation, and had been extended and developed by the intellectual culture of Greece. The Arabs, and after them, other Muslim races, achieved their supremacy by their flexibility, their mental energy and their capacity for adaptation to environment. These qualities were exemplified in the flowering of Arab genius under the Abbasids, when princes vied with scholars in the translation of Greek classics, and the cultivation of sciences. In the Middle Ages, the fullest development of Muslim intellect was expressed in the pioneering work of Muslim scientists, historians, geographers and philosophers. Averroes was undoubtedly the greatest mind in a period which produced a succession of great scientists, scholars and administrators. He was a friend of Maimonides, a great Jewish philosopher of the period who is called Moses by Jews even in modern times.

I propose to trace in this section the various aspects of Muslim culture, its manifestation in the organisation of administration, development of philosophy, science, literature and in the growth of a spiritual freedom in the bosom of Islam.

## Doctrine of Free-Will in Islam

I should like to refer briefly to the doctrine of free-will which has been greatly misunderstood by western scholars, who have attributed the stagnation and backwardness of some of the Muslim countries to this creed. *Tagdir* or predestination means that nothing can happen in this world without God's will. It is suggested by some that such a doctrine annihilates human freedom, and makes man simply an automaton who carries out God's decrees. This is an entirely wrong interpretation as man is free within the limits of his capacity, though his power, no less than his will, is and must be subordinated to the Universal Will of God. The Muslim philosopher, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) clarified this by saying that the human will is determined by some exterior cause, and his will is consequently conditioned by exterior causes, which are not and cannot in all circumstances, be under his control. The relation between the human will and the causes which move the will to action are determined by some other power than man. Muhammad Iqbal's explanation, in his work on the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is that "destiny in time is regarded as prior to the disclosure of its possibilities. Time regarded as destiny forms the very essence of things. The destiny of a thing is not an unrelenting fate working from without like a taskmaster, it is the inward reach of a thing, its realisable possibilities which are within the depths of its nature, and serially actualise themselves without any feeling of external compulsion." I may refer here to Hegel's analysis of free-will. He was the first to state clearly the relation between freedom and necessity. Freedom is the appreciation of necessity. Real freedom is determined by habits and ideas which are the product of physical and social environment. Freedom does not consist in ignoring natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in using them systematically for definite ends. Islam is a religion of emancipated individuality, and in it human personality attains its fullest development. While the social, moral and political atmosphere of the Middle Ages was unfavourable to the highest type of character we find in Islam no external regions of repression, no

ruthless inquisition, and no priestly caste arrogating to itself the right not merely to the interpretation of sacred lore, but also to the performance of religious ceremonies. False systems and a corrupt hierarchy in Arabia had created a malady which poisoned the noble spirit of the country. The immorality of the age had descended from the upper stream of society downwards and the worst qualities of aristocrats found expression in the literature and manners of the pre-Islamic period. This dark period is destitute of profound intellectual convictions, incapable of a fixed determination towards a spiritual life, and is devoid of those passionate and imaginative intuitions into the mysteries of the world which propel both religion and philosophy. The Arabs as a race have always been keenly susceptible to poetry and oratory. These qualities, however, co-existed with gross superstitions, and with passions too vehemently restless to form a stable character. There was no solid conception of law to control caprice, and no idea of the moral worth. Those who accepted the contradictions of the age most deeply were the least capable of rising above them. The number of images was legion, but there was no faith. In place of these conflicting traditions, and gross superstitions, Islam gave first to Arabia, and then to the whole world, a faith of sublime simplicity and directness, which pointed unhesitatingly to certain inflexible rules of conduct with a vividness and energy which have rarely been surpassed. The national genius of the Arabs then attained its fullest development and Islam soon drew all the forces of the Arab race to itself. The ethics of Islam place before us the highest ideal for a man's life, and Muslims are exhorted to be worthy of God and develop the divine element in man. They are enjoined the observance of prayer, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimages, and the practice of self-denial. Charity is no longer a voluntary act of the individual, it becomes a public duty, not only for the state, but also for the individual. Ethics in Islam had its strong roots, and sent out shoots into the life of Asia and Africa and even Europe, which kept it healthy and vigorous. Islam never lost its sense of values and never erected a pedestal which man could not reach. What imparts grandeur to this creed is its conception of

morality, which serves as an infallible guide to the individual, demanding unlimited self-sacrifice and repaying the devotion of its followers by strength in union. Practical, sincere and positive, it never raised points deficient in actuality; it does not invite us to sympathise with the emotions of a visionary, or to follow the whims and fancies of a dreamer. It presents to us a hard, tangible fact, wrought into clear and precise argument, and expressed in unmistakably plain language. Islam developed the hardy and law-abiding qualities, and these are precisely the qualities needed for the building up of the fabric of a state and an empire. Its triumphant success was due to the fact that it regarded morality as the safeguard of the discipline which constitutes a nation's vigour. Religion and morality are a means to the great end of existence, which is strenuous action in a united faith.

### Islamic Conception of God and Man

The other important point to which attention may be drawn is the conception of God revealed in the *Quran*. It is sufficient to remark here that we have for the first time, a comprehensive and sublime conception of the Creator, without any metaphysical subtlety and free from any vagueness whatsoever. On the social side, democracy is the keynote of Islam. The conception of fraternity in Islam produced a profound effect on the social and political structure of the age. It abolished all distinctions of caste and colour, and gave to the lowest and the most degraded being in every country the status of equality with the highest. Just as John Knox laid the foundations of democracy in Scotland by his doctrines, and his belief that the church and the school-house went hand in hand, so Islam was implicit with revolutionary possibilities. It restored freedom to human intelligence by arts and letters and scholarship, and gave freedom to the soul and conscience by strenuous effort after religious and democratic equality. Islam believes in the divine instinct in man and declares that given opportunity and suitable environment, man has power to raise himself from the lowest condition to that of the saint and the ruler.

Islam recognises the capacity of everyone to attain perfection, as each person is potentially God's lieutenant on earth. I may illustrate this by quoting the following from Claude Field's beautiful book, *The Mystics and Saints of Islam* :

"In each human spirit is a Christ concealed,  
To be helped or hindered, to be hurt or healed,  
If from any human soul you lift the veil,  
You will find a Christ there hidden without fail."

The great Persian poet whose poems are studied by all Muslims in India and Iran, Jalal-ud-din Rumi (1207-1273 A.D.) expressed the same idea in his inimitable verses :

"From the inorganic we developed into the vegetable kingdom,  
Dying from the vegetable we rose to animal,  
And leaving the animal we became men,  
Then what fear that death will lower us ?  
The next transition will make us an angel,  
Then shall we rise from angels and merge in the nameless,  
All existence proclaims "Unto Him, shall we return."

To Muslim saints and Sufis union with God is the ultimate end of existence, and a long line of Muslim Sufis, whose brilliant work has illumined Muslim faith, regard absorption in God as the goal of a Sufi's perfection. The following quotation brings clearly the doctrine of Muslim mystics : "When a man becomes annihilated from his attributes, he attains to perfect subsistence; he is neither near nor far, neither stranger nor intimate, neither sober nor intoxicated, neither separated nor united, he has no name or sign or brand." This may be supplemented by the following from the *Quran* : "Oh, thou soul which art at rest, return unto thy Lord, pleased and pleasing Him, enter thou among my servants, and enter thou my garden of felicity." We are the architects of our own fortune, and our future is moulded by our present life. Caliph Ali says, "Say not that man is compelled, for that is the attribution of tyranny to God,

nor say that man has absolute discretion—rather that we are furthered by His help and grace in our endeavour to act righteously and we transgress because of our neglect (of His commands).”

### **Influence of Islam on Arab Society**

The spiritual revolution which the Prophet inaugurated in the anarchical and decadent society of Arabia destroyed the foundations on which the social structure of Arabia had hitherto rested. It is impossible to discuss the subject in a brief essay, as it will take volumes. It is enough if we point out the fundamental changes which Islam wrought in that country. Firstly, the basic principle of Islam was wholly foreign to the Bedouins. They were not so much opposed to the destruction of the idols as to the new spirit of sacrifice and devotion which Islam tried to implant in them. The determination of their whole lives by the thought of God and His Omnipotence, the prayers and fasts, the renunciation of coveted pleasures, and the sacrifice of money and property demanded in God's name,—these ideas ran counter to the traditions and beliefs upon which the Arabs had been brought up for centuries. Hence the Arab who accepted Islam had to unlearn the greater part of his moral code. As a pious Muslim he was expected to return good for evil, forgive his enemy, and he was consoled for his self-abnegation with prospect of being admitted to paradise.<sup>1</sup>

The most profound change was, however, introduced in the sphere of social relations. The Islamic doctrine of fraternity and equality of all Muslims knit up diverse races, creeds and countries into a vigorous community of believers who regarded all Muslims as brothers. The religious bond ignored claims of rank, race and country and by removing feuds and tribal jealousies, it made Arabia an organically powerful state. Arabian society was divided and subdivided into numerous sections, which were based on nobility of birth, as well as on the possession of riches, and Arabia before Islam seethed with numerous tribal, clannish, racial and class distinctions. The *Quran* XLIX 13 declares

<sup>1</sup> *Quran*, III, 128.



"Lo, the noblest of you in the sight of God is he who most doth fear him." This doctrine shattered the foundations on which pre-Islamic society of Arabia had rested. It must be confessed that the Arabs did not always act upon this doctrine even after they had become Muslims, and during the six hundred years which followed the conquest of Syria, Iraq, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain and Persia they maintained not merely their tribal feuds and exclusiveness, but also their peculiar Arab customs and violent tribal and clannish prejudices. Under the Umayyads there was a revival of ancient Arab traditions and customs. The basic principle of Islam, has, however, remained unimpaired, and it has inspired and sustained millions of persons for centuries. "More than any man that has ever lived, Muhammad shaped the destinies of his people; and though they left him far behind as they moved along the path of civilisation, they still looked back to him for guidance and authority at each step."<sup>2</sup>

One of the greatest European scholars, De Goeje, remarks on the personality of the Prophet, "We find in him that sober understanding which distinguished his fellow-tribesmen; dignity, tact, and equilibrium; qualities which are seldom found in people of morbid constitution; self-control in no small degree. Circumstances changed him from a Prophet to a Legislator and a Ruler, but for himself he sought nothing beyond the acknowledgment that he was Allah's Apostle, since this acknowledgment includes the whole of Islam."

2 R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 179.



## CHAPTER II

### SOCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUND

#### Arab Administration

This is not the place for a discussion of the political institutions of the first four Caliphs, as the subject has been dealt with exhaustively by a succession of brilliant European scholars, such as Kremer, Weil, Wellhausen and others. However, one or two aspects of that period should be emphasised here. The administration of state revenue and the formulation of precepts for the rule of conquered countries led to the institution of a comprehensive scheme of democratic and socialistic policy in the administration which has many features of modern socialism. The entire state revenue was deemed to be the common property of the Muslims, and a census of all the Muslims was taken for distributing state revenue on principles which the Caliph Omar clearly formulated. The Prophet's wife 'Aisha headed the list with an annuity of 12,000 dirhams, while the rest of the wives of the Prophet received 10,000 each. Other sections of Muslims followed, such as members of the Hashimite family, etc., etc. Further distinction was made between those Muslims who had accepted Islam early, and others who had entered the Muslim fold later. The Caliph Omar sternly forbade the Arabs to acquire lands outside Arabia, or to engage themselves in agricultural operations in conquered countries. The Caliph thought that the Arabs will lose their martial ardour if they involved themselves in the ownership and management of estates, and his object was to maintain the pristine purity of the Arab race. The booty which fell to the victor in Iraq, Syria and Persia was immense, and when the simple Bedouins saw hundreds of articles of luxury, such as carpets, gold ornaments, costly silk goods, etc. of which they had never dreamt before, they seemed to be in a dreamland, and the rude, unlettered denizens the desert played with them as a child plays with his toys.

It took them a long time to know the value of these articles, and a much longer time to know their utility in a cultured and comfortable life. The Prophet had insisted on absolute, unquestioning obedience in the Arab army, and this was the secret of success of the Muslim army against the Greeks and the Persians. The number of Arab troops which defeated first the Greeks and then the Persians was comparatively small; the total strength of the Arab army which was successful at the historic battle of Yarmuk did not exceed forty-six thousand men, while another tradition estimates the number to be twenty-four thousand only. The army which fought the Persians in Iraq was only about ten thousand, and about ten thousand had remained behind. The detailed account of the battle of Badr shows that the Prophet marshalled the Muslims in a close and compact array. That the line of the battle was so close and compact that not even the smallest space remained unoccupied. The Muslim warriors protected themselves by shields, and one Arabic authority declares that the Prophet commanded them not to unsheath their swords until the enemy was at close quarters. All battles began by single combats of seasoned warriors who would step out of the ranks, recite a song and call upon their opponents to send persons of equal birth to fight them. This tradition of chivalry was maintained by the Arabs in many of their battles in the early period of Islam. At the end of the single combat the battle will start in earnest. "Thus before the battle of Badr, the Mekkans, through their messenger, invited Muhammad to send some heroes of noble birth to meet them. Muhammad answered the summons by selecting three representatives of his own family, Ali, Hamza and Ubaida Ibn Harith. As soon as they advanced, three noble Mekkans, Utba, Sahiba and Walid, came forward to meet them. But as the representatives of the Prophet were in full armour—their faces being covered by helmets—the Mekkans called out, "Are ye of equal birth with us?" Hamza answered, "I am the Lion of God and his Prophet." To him replied Utba, on behalf of the Mekkans, "Thou art noble born and a worthy foe, and I am the Lion of the Halif, but who are the other two with

thee?" Hamza replied, "Ali, the son of Abu Talib and Ubaida, the son of Harith." "Indeed," replied Utba, "these two also are meet foes." Thereupon the single combat began. A great number of the martial songs, sung by way of challenge and defiance, have come down to us, and they bear the unmistakable impress of those times. Thus sang Asim, at the battle of Ohod :

"The arrow and the bow frighten me not, a well-worn hero am I  
 From my shield the missiles rebound.  
 Death alone is certain, life is an empty show;  
 What the Lord has ordained—that must surely come to pass  
 And to Him must we all return.  
 If I fight not, may my mother be childless."

When Muhammad besieged the Jewish settlement at Khaibar, the Jewish troops made a sortie, under the leadership of one of their best warriors, called Mahrab. On the occasion of this attack Mahrab sang thus :

"Khaibar knows that I am Mahrab, full-armed, undaunted,  
 experienced in war.  
 Effective am I when I smite with sword or thrust with a spear."

It was only after a series of such single combats, when both the contending armies had grown more and more fierce, that the general attack at close quarters followed.<sup>3</sup>

As a result of this method of warfare, the contending forces suffered insignificant losses. At the battle of Badr the Muslims lost 14 out of 303, the Mekkans left seventy dead on the field and an equal number were taken prisoners. At Ohod where the Mekkans were victorious, the Muslims lost seventy-five out of seven hundred, and the Mekkans twenty-three out of three thousand. In the battle of Yarmuk, the Greeks resorted to the device of binding the soldiers one after another in chains so as to make their line of

<sup>3</sup> Von Kremer, *Orient under the Caliphs*, translated by Khuda Buksh, pp. 103-105.

troops inseverable. The Persian troops resorted to the same device and the battle was therefore called the "Battle of the Chains." Curiously enough the Persian army employed war-elephants which proved dangerous only to the Persians as the wounded elephants did the most terrible havoc in the Persian ranks. The real reason of the phenomenal success of Muslim army in the early stages lay in its high moral tone, power of perseverance, extraordinary endurance and remarkable mobility. If they were defeated, they quickly took refuge in the desert and suffered comparatively trivial losses. On the other hand, the defeat of their opponents was followed by terrible carnage, and thousands were slaughtered on the battlefields. Again, the Arabs invariably took the offensive, and conducted offensive wars, while the Persians and the Greeks remained on the defensive and lacked the inspiration of a religious zeal which proved a much greater source of strength than the countless hordes of mercenary soliders who had been led into battle solely by the lure of pay and booty.

The Arab conquerors established permanent military stations in Persia, Iraq, Egypt and Syria and garrison towns were established in Basra and Kufa. Both these towns became centres of intellectual activity. In Syria garrisons were established at Damascus, Hims, and Tiberias. Amr Ibn As, the conqueror of Egypt, established a permanent camp at old Babylon, and out of this camp a town grew up which bore the name of Fustat and remained the capital of Egypt until the foundation of Cairo. The next important military station in Egypt was Alexandria, which was strongly garrisoned as it was exposed to the attacks of the Greek navy, and included one quarter of Amr's army. Governorships were established in Syria, Arabia and Egypt. Iraq had two governors, one at Kufa and the other at Basra. Arabia had five, Mekka, Taif, Janad, San'a and Jorash. In Bahrain a special governor was appointed for Upper Egypt. Governorships were of two kinds, governors with limited and governors with unlimited powers. However, in spite of theoretical limitations on their powers even governors with limited powers virtually did as they liked.

## The Caliphate of Omar

It is the testimony of practically all dispassionate historians of Arabs that Caliph Omar was one of the greatest of the early Caliphs and he marked out with vision and sound judgment the political framework of Muslims for more than a century. It was the aim of the Umayyad Caliph Omar II to imitate Omar I in his administrative arrangements. It was in his time that the tide of Muslim conquest flowed with astonishing rapidity over Syria and Persia and he was regarded as the embodiment of all the virtues which a Caliph should possess. Omar was simple and frugal and discharged his duty sternly; was strictly impartial in his administration, but was tender to the weak. He was a born ruler of men. A great Muslim historian, Ibn-i-Khallikan, declared, "that the good fortune of Islam was shrouded in the grave-clothes of Omar bin Khattab." Tabari, the famous historian of Islam, gives the following characteristic anecdotes of the great Caliph:<sup>4</sup>

"I saw Umar coming to the Festival. He walked with bare feet, using both hands (for he was ambidexterous) to draw round him a red embroidered cloth. He towered above the people as though he was on horseback." A client of (the Caliph) Uthman b. 'Affan relates that he mounted behind his patron and they rode together to the enclosures for the beasts which were delivered in payment of the poor-tax. It was an exceedingly hot day and the *simoom* was blowing fiercely. They saw a man clad only in a loin-cloth, and a short cloak (*rida*), in which he had wrapped his head, driving the camel into the enclosure. Uthman said to his companion, "Who is this, think you?" When they came up to him, behold, it was Umar b. al-Khattab. "By God," said Uthman, "*this is the strong, the trusty.*" Umar used to go round the markets and recite the *Quran* and judge between disputants wherever he found them. When Ka 'bu'l-Ahbar, a well-known Rabbin of Medina, asked him how he could obtain access to the commander of the faithful, he received this answer, "There is no door nor curtain to be passed, he performs the rites of prayers, then he takes his seat, and any one that wishes may speak to him". Umar

4 Tabari I, 2729.

said in one of his public orations: "By Him who sent Muhammad with the truth, were a single camel to die of neglect on the bank of the Euphrates, I should fear lest God should call the family of al-Khattab (meaning himself) to account therefor." "If I live", he is reported to have said on another occasion, "please God, I will assuredly spend a whole year in travelling among my subjects, for I know they have wants which are cut short ere they reach my ears: the governors do not bring the wants of the people before me, while the people themselves do not attain to me. So I will journey to Syria and remain there two months, then to Egypt and remain there two months, then to Bahrain and remain there two months, then to Kufa, and remain there two months, then to Basra and remain there two months; and by God, it will be a year well spent". One night he came to the house of Abdu'l-Rahman b. Awf and knocked at the door, which was opened by Abdu'l-Rahman's wife. "Do not enter," said she, "until I go back and sit in my place;" so he waited. Then she bade him come in, and on his asking, "Have you anything in the house?" she fetched him some food. Meanwhile Abdu'l-Rehman was standing by engaged in prayer. Abdu'l-Rahman immediately pronounced the final salaam, and returning to the Caliph said, "O Commander of the Faithful: what has brought you here at this hour?" Umar replied, "A party of travellers who alighted in the neighbourhood of the market. I was afraid that the thieves of Medina might fall on them. Let us go and keep watch." So he set off with Abdu'l-Rahman, and when they reached the market-place they seated themselves on some high ground and began to converse. They went to the spot and found a company drinking wine. "Begone," said Umar to Abdu'l-Rahman, "I know him." Next morning he sent for the culprit and said, addressing him by name, "Last night you were drinking wine with your friends". "O Commander of the Faithful, how could you ascertain that?" "I saw it with my own eyes;" "Has not God forbidden you to play the spy?" Umar made no answer and pardoned his offence. When Umar ascended the pulpit for the purpose of warning



the people that they must not do something, he gathered his family and said to them, "I have forbidden the people to do so and so. Now, the people look at you as the birds look at flesh, and I swear by God that if I find any one of you doing this thing, I will double the penalty against him." Whenever he appointed a governor he used to draw up in writing a certificate of investiture, which he caused to be witnessed by some of the refugees or helpers. It contained the following instructions: "he must not ride on horse-back, nor eat white bread, nor wear fine clothes nor set up a door between himself and those who had sought to ask him. It was Umar's custom to go forth with his governors, on their appointment, to bid them farewell." "I have not appointed," he would say, "over the people of Muhammad (God bless him and grant him peace) that you may drag them by their hair and scourge their skins, but in order that you may lead them in prayer and judge between them with right, and divide (the public money) amongst them with equity. I have not made you lords of their skin and hair. Do not flog the Arabs lest you humiliate them, and do not keep them long on foreign service lest you tempt them to sedition, and do not neglect them lest you render them desperate. Confine yourself to the *Quran*, write few traditions of Muhammad (God bless him and grant him peace;) and I am your ally." He used to permit petitions against his governors. On receiving a complaint about any one of them he confronted him with the accuser and punished him if his guilts were proved.

*Omar's Institutions.* Omar fixed the salary of officers and appointed judges: he also ordered a survey of Babylon (Sawad) for purposes of taxation and on the basis of the survey the land-tax, which was payable on various plots, was assessed. This register recorded minutely the area and the quality of the soil. He also opened the Suez Canal to establish direct connection between the Nile and the Red Sea. This remarkable achievement was due to the fact that a terrible famine was raging in Arabia at the time and an epidemic had laid waste Syria. The Caliph commanded the governor of Egypt to excavate the whole canal which

branched off at Babylon, cut through Cairo, and fell into the Red Sea near Klysmā<sup>5</sup>

This was accomplished within a year, and the prices of grain fell immediately in Mekka and Medina. The traditionist Bukhari mentions a tradition on the authority of Ibn-i-Abbas that shortly before his death the Prophet had advised the expulsion of all the infidels from the Arabian peninsula. Omar carried out this instruction and the rich and industrious Jews were expelled from Khaibar, while the Christian and Jewish population from Najran and Fadak were also driven away. Ibn-i-Athir states that the conduct of the inhabitants of Khaibar towards one of Omar's sons was the main reason for the expulsion of the Jews from that part. The Jews were allotted Jericho and Taima for their settlement. The Christians were assigned quarters near Kufa, while some went to Syria. Omar aimed at keeping the Arab race pure and establishing the unity of his country on the basis of the community of race and religion. Arabia was to be the fortress of Islam, and none but Muslims could reside there. Omar believed strongly in the superiority of the Arab race. He was aware of the ties that bound the Arabs together, and aimed at maintaining the Arab union. The Arabs of Iraq bore a grudge against the Persians for the persecution to which they had been subjected. Christian Arabs in Syria and Iraq helped the Muslims of Arabia and their patriotism was a more powerful factor than religion. Zubed of the tribe of Taye fought on the Muslim side in the Battle of the Bridge and was killed there though he was a Christian. In the same manner, on the day of Buwayb, Anas Ibn Hilal al-Namir joined the Muslim ranks, bringing with him a great force of his tribesmen who were Christians, but they wished to take the side of their countrymen. Many of the Taghlibites who also were Christians acted in the same way. In the same way, many Arabs of Iraq and Syria assisted their brethren from Arabia. When Khalid Ibn-i-Ukabah went to rape the Byzantine territory he was met by a Christian Arab who told the genera

<sup>5</sup> Von Kremer, *Orient under the Caliphs*, translated by Khuda Bukhsh, pp. 115-116.



that, though not a Muslim, he would give him good advice. He told him that the Byzantines would fight till midday ; if they found the enemy weak they would destroy them, but if the enemy made a desperate resistance the Byzantine would leave them and fly. This advice proved most useful to the Muslim army.

Omar knew the racial tie that bound the Arabs together, and that is why he urged Muslims to conquer Syria and Iraq. In Iraq the Christian Arab tribes of Taghlib, Quda'ah and Namir objected to the payment of the poll-tax. Omar granted them exemption from the tax, though he stipulated that they should not Christianize their children. Islam created a bond of Arab union, and Islamic union and Arab union were synonymous at this time. The Arabs, who were split into numerous tribes and clans, were fused into a unity, and for pride of pedigree, pride in piety was established. However, the pride of descent and tribal patriotism did not entirely cease after the introduction of Islam though it acquired a religious character. Under the Umayyads all the old pre-Islamic divisions among the races of Arabia were revived and some of the Caliphs, who were sunk in sloth and debauchery, took delight in reviling the traditions of Islam. In Arabia itself distinctions among Arab tribes were greatly prized. The Kuraish, being the Prophet's tribe, was regarded as the highest in Arabia. Members of the tribe were supposed to have various privileges over the rest of humanity. It was thought that Kuraish women could conceive, after the age of sixty, and Arab women after fifty, while women of other countries were deemed incapable of this achievement. No daughter of Kuraish woman could become a slave girl; no Kuraishite could possibly be a free thinker; no Kuraishite should study deeply any other subject except sacred history.

*Increase in Arab Population.* The number of Arabs who conquered Syria, Iraq, Persia and Egypt was exceedingly small and the conquest of these countries was achieved by a small number of Arabs. The ever-expanding Muslim empire needed large number of men to keep them in order

and Arabs tried to meet the demand by raising large families. Pagan Arabs took particular delight in this congenial task. The Prophet's grand-father Abd-al-Muttalib, who had been surpassed by other Kuraish tribes, took a vow that if ten sons were born to him and reached manhood, he would sacrifice one of them. Ten sons were born to him and he became a powerful man. The Muslims being exceedingly small relatively to non-Muslims in conquered countries determined to increase their number, and made concubines of their Greek, Persian and Coptic captives. Polygamy proved essential for the solution of their problem as without a substantial increase in their number, Muslim rule in these countries would have been extinguished. According to Jurji Zaydan<sup>6</sup> men vied with one another in the acquisition of slave girls, and some men had as many as 80 wives and concubines at a time. Thus Al-Mughirah Ibn Shu'bah shared his house with four legitimate wives and 76 concubines. Their progeny multiplied, and it was not uncommon to meet parents who had 50 to 100 children. Three hundred, it is said, were born to Al-Mu-hallab. Abd-al-rahman Ibn-al-Hakam, the Umayyad, left 150 sons and 50 daughters. Tamin Ibn al-Muizz, the Fatimide, left more than 100 sons and 50 daughters. Omar Ibn al-Wahid had 90 sons of whom 60 rode horses. Sirin had 30 sons and 11 daughters by one wife. The Arabs spread over the world not only by conquest but by immigration *en masse* when thousands of families would betake themselves to the conquered land of the Muslims. Even before Islam they used to migrate to Egypt or Syria, and in times of drought they would go to Iraq and Fars and obtain dates and barley from the persons. They rarely made a prolonged stay in these countries, but would return home. After the Muslim conquest, however, they began to settle down.

*Factional Fights among Arab Tribes—the Maaddites and Yemenites.* There is another quality of the Arab which has been noticed by historians. It was the rivalry between the tribes of Adnan and Katan. It runs like a red thread through their whole history. The factious and clannish life of the

<sup>6</sup> *Umayyads and Abbasids*, pp. 43-44.

Arabs accounts for the failure of the race to build a durable administration. Compare administrative framework which the Arabs constructed in Sind, Baghdad and Cairo with the policy which our Mughal emperors pursued in India. The first six Mughal emperors wrought a profound change in the social life of India, in about a century and a half. The Arabs in Sind left no mark on the economy of the Province, though they ruled that Province for centuries. The Arab domination of the Baghdad Caliphate was of a comparatively short duration, and the supremacy of the Persian race was an accomplished fact under the Abbasids. Ibn-i-Khaldun, the great historian of Islam, has discussed this question in his *Prolegomena* (*Muqaddama*). He has given reasons for the failure of the Arabs to consolidate their empire and their incapacity to unite against a common enemy. The Arabs conferred an inestimable boon on the Spanish people by improving the standards of living of the people, fostering science and art, building noble edifices, which are a monument to their love of art and culture. In Spain, too, they remained hopelessly divided into tribes and clans, and were never fused into a unity. Their system of irrigation did much to fertilise the soil. But they showed little initiative in administration, and Spain was split up into a number of petty principalities, which carried on an internecine struggle with one another. Albert Calvert remarks in his work on the Alhambra, "The Muslim empire in Spain was but a brilliant exotic that took no fixed root in the soil it adorned. Their whole existence was a prolonged and gallant struggle to maintain a foothold in a land usurped. Never was the annihilation of a nation more complete." They had no power of assimilation, and their pride of race forbade them to meet other races on a footing of equality. Their treatment of the Spanish Muslims was so degrading that it compelled even the most devout Spanish Muslims to revolt against them. The revolt of Ibn-i-Hifsun against the Caliph of Cordova should be read by those who have painted an ideal picture of the Arab rule. He was joined by thousands of Spanish Muslims, and the rebellion of these Muslim converts proved a source of weakness to the Caliphate. It is not surprising that after their victory over the Arabs,

Ibn-i-Hifsun's followers embraced the faith of their forefathers. It is true, that many Spanish Muslims rose to positions of influence and power in Muslim Spain. The fact, however, remains that the haughty, proud and ignorant Arabs treated Spanish Muslims with withering contempt, and called them Spanish dogs. Granada fell on January 2, 1492, when the banner of Castile floated over the tower of the Alhambra. One need only go through its sordid history in the ten years preceding its fall to become convinced of the utter incapacity of the Arabs for administration. In June, 1482, Abu Abdullah (Boabdil) dethroned Abul Hasan, his father. On Boabdil's capture at Lucena in 1483, the dethroned king was again enthroned, but quickly abdicated in favour of his brother, Muhammad XII. Boabdil, later was reinstated, but being a stooge of the Christian king, finally surrendered himself and his kingdom to Ferdinand of Aragon. Could there be a more apt example of the incapacity of later Arabs in Spain for administration? Throughout the history of the Arab rule the rivalry between the Adnan and Katan or Mudain and Kais raged furiously all over the Muslim world. It started in the Umayyad days, and extended to all the countries which Muslim arms had subdued. Dozy, in his *Spanish Islam* has given a full account of the havoc wrought by the suicidal quarrels of the two Arab tribes. The Syrian Arabs who settled in Spain carried on the vendetta in all its rigorous and ruthless spirit. Before the accession of Abd'ul-Rahman I to the throne of Spain, that unfortunate country had been devastated by this horrible "disease" and the rivalry between Mudain and Kais had laid waste large parts of Spain. The Prophet had succeeded in uniting the Arabs, but under the Umayyad Caliphs the old tribal jealousies revived. The history of the world shows us nothing analogous to the mutual hatred which existed between the Katanids who were usually Yemenites and Ma'addites, Najdites, Mudarites and Kaisites. The district of Damascus, for instance, was for two years the scene of merciless warfare because a Ma'addite had plucked a melon growing in a Yemenite's garden; and in Murcia blood flowed in torrents for seven years because a Ma'addite as he passed a Yemenite's field had chanced thoughtlessly

to tear a vine-leaf. Strong racial antipathies have from time to time existed in Europe, but they have at any rate arisen as a natural consequence of the relation between victors and conquered. In Arabia, on the other hand, neither tribe could claim sway over the other. It is true that in the days of old the Ma'addites of Najd had recognised the King of Yemen as their overlord and had paid him tribute; but they had done this of their own free will, since a ruler of some kind had become a necessity, if these fanatical hordes were to be preserved from self-destruction, while a chieftain chosen from any one of their own clans would be obeyed by none of the rest. Whenever these Ma'addite tribes, after having been temporarily united under a chief of their own choice, reasserted their independence as frequently happened—civil war soon compelled them to seek another ruler. Being thus driven to make choice between anarchy and foreign domination, the tribal chiefs, after a long internecine struggle took counsel together. "There is nothing left for us to do," they agreed, "but once more to place the king of Yemen over us. Let us pay him tribute of sheep and camels, and he shall in return prevent the strong from oppressing the weak".

Save for a few dialectical divergence, the two races, spoke the same tongue, and it appears that in the Moslem armies a Ma'addite never had any difficulty in understanding a Yemenite. They had, moreover, the same predilections and customs, and the great majority of both races were nomads. Finally, when both of them embraced Islam, they had the same religion. In short, the difference between the two tribes was less than that which existed between one Teutonic tribe and another, when the barbarians invaded the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, though the reasons which accounted for racial antipathy in Europe did not exist in the East, such antipathy among the Arabs evinced a tenacity unknown to Western lands. Three or four hundred years' ancestral hostility has disappeared in Europe, but among the Bedouins the blood-feud has endured for twenty-five centuries. It can be traced back to the earliest historical times and is far from extinct today. "Ancestral enmity," writes

an ancient poet, "is a heritage from our forefathers, and while their descendants exist, it will abide". Never has this animosity led to such atrocities as in the East: among other races never stifled the most tender and pious sentiments of nature: we do not hear of a son despising and hating his mother on the sole ground that she did not belong to his father's stock. A Yemenite who was making the ceremonial circuit of the Kaba at Mekka was asked why, though he prayed for his father, he never prayed for his mother. "For my mother," cried the Yemenite disdainfully, "how could I pray for her? She is a daughter of Ma'addite."

*Baneful Effects of this Feud.* Of this ancestral hatred, handed down from generation to generation in spite of community of language, laws, customs, modes of thought, religion, and to some extent, of origin, since both races were Semetic—we can only say that its causes are inexplicable, but that "it is in the blood": probably the Arabs of the seventh century would have been as little able to give an account of its origin, as are the Yemenites who today wander over the deserts of the province of Jerusalem, and who, when asked by travellers why they are sworn foes of the Kaisites (Ma'addites), of the province of Hebron, reply that all they know about the matter is that the mutual hatred has existed from time immemorial. Islam far from diminishing this instinctive aversion, gave it strength and keenness which it had never reached before. While glaring at one another defiantly, Yemenites and Ma'addites were compelled henceforth to fight beneath the same banner, to live side by side, to share the fruits of victory, and this close association and daily intercourse seemed but to engender fresh disputes and affrays. The feud, indeed, was destined to assume an interest and importance which it did not possess when it was confined to an almost unknown corner of Asia. In the years to come it would drench Spain and Sicily with blood. Ultimately this strange antipathy determined the fate, not only of the conquered nations, but of the Latin and the Teutonic races as a whole, for it alone arrested the Moslems in their conquering path at the moment when they menaced France and all western Europe.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Dozy, *Spanish Islam*, pp. 66-68.



*The Tribal Feud in Spain.* The rivalry was intensified in Spain and this was one of the causes of destruction of Muslim power in that country. Mekkari whose monumental history of *Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, was translated by Pascal De Gayangos in 1842, gives an account of the various tribes of the Adnan and Khattan clans who settled in different parts of Spain. He says that the great stock of Adnan "from which issued the Bani Khandaf and from these the Bani Kuraish sent many families to Andalus where they might be found under various nominations". (Bk V. ch. 3, pp. 20-29).

Mekkari informs us that the families descended from the stock of Hashim from the tribe of Kuraish were numerous in Spain. The tribe of Bani Umayyad gave several Caliphs to the country but they were known under the patronymic of Kuraish.

*The Fight between the Two Tribes in Spain.* The Khattan tribe however was much more numerous in Spain than the tribe of Adnan and they would have achieved the domination of the country but for the establishment of the Umayyad, Abd'ul-Rahman as the king of Spain. Abd'ul-Rahman subjected the whole of Spain to his sway and the empire attained its zenith under the great Caliph Abdur Rehman III. Al Mansur Ibn Ali Amir, the great Vizier, consolidated his rule by appointing to the troops the generals of various countries and tribes. "So, for instance, the general of an army would have under his orders a portion of each tribe, and a captain would seldom command soldiers of his own tribe, by these means the wound was cauterized, civil dissensions were somewhat allayed, and peace, if not friendship, was established between the Arabian tribes inhabiting the western district, although they not infrequently broke out in other parts of Andalus where the same precautions had not been taken."<sup>8</sup>

*The Battle of Secunda.* The rivalry between the Ma'addites and the Yemenites was manifested in a desperate

battle at Secunda, an old Roman walled town, on the left bank of the Godaver river opposite to Cordova. Sumayl the leader of the Ma'addites attacked the combined strength of the Yemenites in this battle. Sumayl was a Syrian and was determined on establishing the domination of the Ma'addites in Spain. Leaping from their horses, each man selected his adversary. The two tribes fought until their swords were broken, and every man used whatever weapon he could lay his hand on; one would use a bow, another a quiver; while a third would throw sand in his enemies' eyes or beat them with their fists, or tear out their hair. The battle took place in the middle of the eighth century. The Yemenites were defeated and their chief knew the doom which awaited him. The Ma'addites dragged their prisoners to the cathedral of Cordova which was dedicated to St. Vincent. The prosecutor, who combined the functions of judge and executioner, said to a fellow tribesman who was disgusted with this butchery, "This is a glorious day for thee and for thy people." At least the man could restrain himself no longer and shouted to Sumayl, "Arab, if thou takest so atrocious a pleasure in slaughtering my country men, it is because thou rememberest (the battle of) Siffin. Stay thy murderous hand or I will make the cause of the victims that of the Syrians." It was only after this protest that Sumayl replaced his sword in its scabbard, otherwise all the Yemenites would have been killed. A few years after this bloody encounter Abd'ul-Rahman was invited to Spain, and through his tact and prudence he succeeded in founding the Umayyad dynasty in that country.

I have given a disproportionate space to the tribal jealousies of the Arabs, as I feel that this gives us an explanation of the failure of the Arabs to establish their rule on a durable basis. Wherever the Arabs went, they carried their tribal jealousies and aristocratic pride with them. In all the important cities such as Baghdad and Damascus each tribe was allotted a separate quarter of the town, and each quarter was a self-contained communal centre, and conducted its own local administration. Thus Baghdad was divided into several sections, and each section was occupied by an



Arab tribe. The Arabian exclusiveness and pride under the Umayyad Caliphs were the main causes which goaded the Persians into rebellion. The Arab society was riven by dissensions and jealousies, tribal, personal and racial, and the Arab race was destitute of the organising ability and capacity for assimilation which the Turks, the Persians and the Indians have displayed in abundance. The Arabs had a wonderful opportunity of absorbing the Spanish race, and establishing a synthesis not merely of the two cultures but also of the two races, but they missed the opportunity and went on quarrelling among themselves and keeping up the tribal feuds at a time when the Christian power in the North was being consolidated. The tribal feuds in Spain revived immediately after the death of a strong ruler such as Abd'ul-Rahman I, Abd'ul Rahman III and Al-mansur. The characteristic qualities of the Arab race, indiscipline, tribal jealousy, overweening pride and the arrogance destroyed the foundations of administration. It is doubtful whether Islam would have made considerable progress if Arabs had retained the direction and control of the Caliphate. Their greatest administrators were the early Caliphs, and the progress of Islam in its early stages was due mainly to their sagacious statesmanship. As the Arabs looked down upon the Persians, the Persians looked down upon the Arabs, while both were despised by the Turks who first came to Baghdad as the bodyguards of the Caliph. In Spain the Arab rule would have disappeared after a short time, but for the powerful currents of energy which a succession of 'Berbers' injected into the decadent Arab tribes. Had Yusuf Ibn Tashifin failed in the battle of Zallaka, Alfonso VI would have established Christian rule throughout Spain. It was the flaming enthusiasm and rugged energy of the Berbers which gave a new life to the dying empire of the Arabs.

The administrative capacity of the Arabs has been greatly overrated and it is probable that Islam would have made greater progress if a more gifted race had been called upon to extend its sway. In piety they were, and will always remain, supreme. But in administration they have been singularly deficient.

The Persians proved their superiors in every branch of intellectual activity. Unfortunately the culture which the Arabs developed in Spain seems to have enfeebled them. It did not act as a stimulus to strenuous action or heroic endeavour, nor was it integrated with the political and economic life of the people. The arts and sciences which the Arabs fostered are a noble monument to their love of art, and their contribution to the grace and refinement of life. But it had no root in the political or economic life of the people, and remained an exotic. These remarks are meant only for the petty principalities which arose on the ruins of the Umayyad dynasty, such as Seville, Malaga and others and are not applicable to Cordova. Cordova and the Alhambra are a source of legitimate pride to the creative work of Islam. Within the two factions of Ma'addites and Yemenites, there were a variety of other factions that quarrelled and fought. The dissensions spread through Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Fars, Khurasan, Africa and Spain. In all these places the two factions were represented. The Ma'addite governor would promote Ma'addites, and the Yemenite will be partial to his Yemenite tribesmen. These dissensions pervaded every branch of the administration and even affected the appointment and dismissal of Caliphs, governors, judges, and other functionaries. The vendetta was applied on a colossal scale, and few remained immune from its virus. E. A. Robinson mentions in his *Biblical Researches in Palestine* (published in 1861, vol. II, pp. 17-18) that "no person of whom we enquired could tell the origin or nature of this distinction; except that it goes back beyond the memory of man, and does not now pertain in any degree to religious worship or doctrine." Whenever the quarrels between the two tribes threatened to undermine the foundations of administration a Kuraishite governor was ordinarily appointed. The Kuraishite were also sharply divided into two factions.

*Exclusiveness of Arab Conquerors.* The Arabs were conscious of their privileged position in their new religion and boasted that their race constituted its origin and its chief part. Their hauteur and pride roused the jealousies of the

Muslims of other nations whom they treated with the greatest contempt. The non-Muslim Arabs were called their "Clients" and the quarrels between the Clients and the Arabs developed into a racial war between the Persians and the Arabs and brought about the fall of the Umayyads. The Arabs disliked praying behind a Client and when they did so, declared it a special act of self-abasement. Nafi Ibn Azrak, a famous Muslim of the second generation, when a funeral passed by would ask, "Whose it was?" If the deceased was a Kuraish he would express sorrow for his family; if an Arab, he would grieve for his town; but if he was a Client, in other words, a non-Arab, he would say, "God's property; He takes and leaves what He will." A common maxim of the period was, "Three things only stop prayer: the passing of a Client, an ass, or a dog." The Clients were not called by their patronymics but by their actual names or sobriquets. Social distinctions were rigid, and no Client could walk in line with or in front of an Arab in a procession; if they were invited to a feast the Arab would take precedence. The Arabs regarded themselves as superior to all other nations on the face of the earth. It was the prerogative of the Arab to rule, and everyone else was commanded to obey. During the Umayyad period the Arabs monopolised the administration and occupied themselves with politics. The trade, arts and crafts, scholarship and other occupations were left to non-Arabs. Weavers, spinners and teachers were recruited from the non-Arabs. The Arabs took no interest in scholarship except poetry and history, as history was regarded essential for government and conquest. All the clerks belonged to tolerated creeds and classes, and very few Arabs were employed in public offices as few were able to count or write. The Umayyad period was pre-eminently the period of Arab domination. The Caliph Muawiya was frightened by the increasing number of Clients, and seriously thought of exterminating them totally or partially. He suggested to some of his advisers that he should kill a large portion of them, so that only a small number would remain to maintain the market and do menial work. One of his advisers Samurah Ibn Jundub approved of Muawia's monstrous

proposal, and offered to undertake it himself. Muawia, however, desisted from this horrible project and the Clients were saved.

*Arab Racial Arrogance.* The wine of power had apparently gone to the head of the Arabs, and this is not surprising as they had been raised from their wild state in a few years to the headship of empires, and they began to think that they were endowed with "talents which no other race possessed." We find the same pride of race among the Romans, while Rudyard Kipling gave crude expression to the old doctrine of racial domination in a new garb. The latest exponent of this theory was Hitler. The Arabs guarded their pedigree from foreign admixture, and non-Arabs were excluded even from important religious posts as judgeship. A foreigner was not allowed to marry an Arab girl, even though he were a prince and she of the humblest clan. No Arab could be made a slave. A Persian nobleman who wished to marry a girl of the humblest clan was rejected by the girl. The Arabs declined equality to new converts. The democratic principle of Islam was wholly forgotten and was in constant conflict with the rabid racial prejudices of the Arabs.

The treatment which the Arabs meted out to the Clients had its inevitable result in incessant insurrections and rebellions, and Hajjaj, the cruel governor of the Umayyads, was able to maintain order only by ruthless destruction of his opponents. Goldziher remarks "that the first Muslims were entirely ignorant of art and science, all their attention being devoted to the ordinances of the *Quran* and to the practices (*Sunna*) of the Prophet. At that time the Arabs knew nothing of the way by which learning is taught, of the art of composing books, and of the means whereby knowledge is registered. The purity of the Arabic tongue had become impaired; hence arose the science of grammar and the rapid development of law and divinity brought it about that other sciences, e.g. logic and dialectic, were professionally cultivated, in the great cities of the Muslim Empire. The inhabitants of these cities were chiefly Persians, freedmen and tradesmen, who had long been accustomed to the arts of

civilization. Accordingly the most eminent of the early grammarians, traditionists and scholastic theologians, as well as those learned in the principles of law and in the interpretation of the *Quran* were Persians by race or education, and the saying of the Prophet was verified "If knowledge were attached to the end of the sky, some amongst the Persians would have reached it". Amidst all this intellectual activity the Arabs who had recently emerged from the nomadic life, found the exercise of military and administrative command too engrossing to give them leisure for literary avocations which have always been disdained by a ruling caste. They left such studies to the Persians and the mixed race (*Al-muwalladun*) which sprang from intermarriages of the conquerors with the conquered. They did not entirely look down upon the men of learning, but recognised their services, since after all it was Islam and the sciences connected with Islam that profited thereby.<sup>9</sup>

The Arab rulers disliked the Nordic races with their white or red complexion and brown or red hair, and the members of these tribes were nicknamed as red, while the Arabs prided themselves on their dark complexion. This was the main reason why the Kharejites attracted so many Persians and Iraqis to their banner.

The Kharejites were composed of sincere and ardent believers, who carried out the democratic principles of Islam to their logical conclusion. Dismissing all the tribal and racial distinctions as wholly inconsistent with the basic principle of Islam, they according to Dozy, the great historian of Islam, "were the true disciples of Muhammad." In the days when civil war was cruelly ravaging the provinces of the vast Muslim Empire, when each Arab tribe alleged its noble origin as a claim to power, the Kharejites held fast to the beautiful verse of the *Quran* "All Muslims are brothers". "Do not ask us," said they, "whether we are descended from Kais or from Tomim; we are all children of Islam, we worship the unity of God, and He is best pleased with him who best shows his gratitude". If they laid stress on equality and fraternity, it was because their ranks were

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*.

recruited rather from working classes than from the aristocracy. Justly indignant at the corruption of their contemporaries who gave themselves up, without scruple and without shame to every form of vice and licentiousness, in the belief that in order to blot out all their sins it sufficed to attend public prayers and make pilgrimage to Mecca—the Kharejites preached that faith without works is dead, and that sinners as well as unbelievers will be damned. Extravagant ideas, in fact, prevailed as to the solvent power of a faith; and yet the faith of many of the intellectuals of the day was then often little else than mere deism. Mechanical repetition of religious creed was deemed sufficient for salvation by the evil-doers. "What preparation hast thou made for such a day as this?" asked the pious theologian Hasan of the poet Farazdak who stood beside him at a funeral. "The witness that I have borne for sixty years to the unity of God," replied the poet calmly. The Kharejites were strongly opposed to this soft doctrine. "If this be true," they urged, "Satan himself will escape damnations."

*The Shu'ubite Movement.* Something should be said here about the Shu'ubite movement, which had a profound effect on Islam. The Shu'ubites were non-Arabs, who had embraced Islam. They were recruited mainly from Persia and Iraq, and were determined opponents of Arab domination and exclusiveness. They denied the claim of the Arabs to superiority, and asserted their right to equality in all spheres of life. The bolder spirits among the Shu'ubites went further and declared that the Arabs were absolutely inferior to the Persians and other races. The Shu'ubites particularly directed their attack against the racial arrogance of the Arabs who never ceased to proclaim their superiority to all men; while the Persian genealogists and philologists took delight in exposing the scandalous and discreditable history of the Arab tribes. It is true, of course, that many Clients assumed Arabic names precisely as many Spanish Muslims called themselves Arabs and disguised their foreign extraction by most ingenious devices. Many provided themselves with fanciful pedigrees, and posed as Arabs. The process of assimilation in language, manners and customs had been



in full swing for over a century, and it had become difficult at times to distinguish an Arab from a Persian. In one sphere, however, there was harmony and concord. On the common ground of Muslim science, racial animosities were forgotten, and members of both races co-operated in common intellectual pursuits. Arabic was the language of the court diplomacy and administration and the economic progress under the Abbasids was accompanied by an outburst of an intellectual activity such as Asia had never witnessed before. Men travelled enormous distances in search of knowledge, and a Muslim of Cordova would make it a point to visit Baghdad. Most of the Iraqi nobles had accepted Islam in the time of Caliph Omar, but the treatment of the Clients by the Arabs produced numerous insurrections against the Umayyad Caliph. Hajjaj, the cruel governor of the Umayyad Caliph was kept busy in suppressing numerous insurrections which were led by the old tribal chiefs, the Dekhans, who had been converted to Islam. The proportion between Clients and Arabs varied at different times. In Ali's time the proportion of Clients to citizens was 1 : 5. Von Kremer points out that the majority of converts in Syria, Egypt, Africa as well as Iraq, Persia and Transoxiana chose military service and entered the army. Tarik, the conqueror of Spain, and Musa Ibn Nusayr, conqueror of the *Maghrib* were Clients, yet they had to pay the hateful capitation-tax, were exposed to social and political segregation, and were liable to the ever increasing exactions by government officials. The Kharejites and the Murjites rejected on principle every distinction between Arabs and Mawalis in Islam, and it is for this reason that thousands of Mawalis threw in their lot with the Kharejites, and took part in numerous insurrections and rebellions that were organised against the government. The Shiite party was also largely recruited out of the Clients, and in Merv the masses of Shias consisted of Mawalis. They were helped by the Arabs who were opposed to the Umayyads. Kufa was the centre of resistance to the Umayyads, and more than half the population of Kufa consisted of Mawalis who were Persians and were engaged in handicraft, trade and commerce. They had become prisoners of war,

and had been brought to Kufa, where they accepted Islam. They received their freedom from their Arab masters and occupied an anomalous position in Kufa society. Conscious of their talents they demanded freedom and insisted upon political rights. In Kufa also resided Maisara, Ibn Mahan, Abu Salma who were deemed to be the representatives of the concealed Islam. All of them were Persian Mawalis and were mainly traders and artisans. Secret negotiations were established from Khurasan, and Merv was linked up with Kufa. Hundreds of conspirators travelled to and fro between these two countries, and the Mawalis also received the support of Shias who were strongly opposed to the Umayyads and were determined to restore the Caliphate to the House of Ali. The support of the Shias was secured by carrying on a propaganda in the name of Hashim the common ancestor of both the Abbasids and the Alids and it was only after the victory of the Abbasids that the Shias realised that the members of the House of Abbas would be Caliphs, and the House of Ali would be excluded from the Caliphate.

*The Treatment of Christians by Arabs.* As regards the subject races which did not accept Islam wide toleration was granted to them. They were allowed to manage the affairs of their community, maintain their churches, cloisters and chapels in rural areas, and small towns. The Muslim population in large towns was concentrated and no new church could be built without the permission of the administration. The treatment meted out to Christians in Syria, Egypt and Iraq was based on these principles, and marked considerable advance in the policy which governed the action of feudal Europe. The Zoroastrians in Persia however were not granted religious toleration. Their fire-temples were destroyed, and under the Umayyads, Abdullah Ibn Tahir, governor of Iraq, appointed a special officer for this purpose. But the officer seems to have been lax in the performance of his duty, for he is said to have made a fortune of forty million dirhams. Most of the fire-temples were left intact and the fire-temple at Shiz in Armenia was tolerated for a long time. The Jews were given complete freedom to maintain their



synagogues. In Baghdad itself there were many Christian churches and cloisters and the Christians predominated in the Accounts Department and Board of Taxes of the government. In Iraq the Christians shared with the Persians and the Dekhans most of the posts in this department. The Umayyad Caliph Omar II followed a short-sighted policy and excluded them from all public offices. The first Abbasid Caliph, Saffah, was a narrow-minded bigot, who followed in Omar's footsteps. Even the great Harun-al-Rashid was obliged to publish an ordinance hostile to the Christians in response to public measure. In the year 191 A. H. (807 A. D.) he issued an ordinance by which all churches in the border countries were to be demolished and non-Muslims were to dress differently from Muslims. In Africa Ibrahim Ibn Aghlab passed severe laws against the Christians and the Jews. The Caliph Mutawakkil, who was equally hostile to the Mutazlites, the Shias and the Christians, and was notorious for his immorality, adopted severe measures against the Christians. The Caliph Muktadir issued an order whereby no non-Muslim was to act as a physician, or money-changer and decreed that he should dress differently from Muslims. The Persians had forbidden marriage between Arabs and Persians in the days of their domination. The Umayyads who were the leaders of Arab chauvinism forbade marriages between Clients and Arab women. If a Client married an Arab woman, and the ruler heard of it, he would compel the man to divorce her. When the Arabs of the Banu Sulaim at Ruha gave one of their daughters to the Client, and the governor of Medina heard of it, he separated the parties, and administered a beating of two hundred stripes to the poor Client. The man's head and eye-brows were also shaved. A famous Client such as Abdullah Ibn Aun, who had attained fame among the Epi-goni, but had the misfortune to be a Client, was beaten with scourge for marrying an Arab woman. Salman was one of the most revered companions of the Prophet for his defence of Medina. He fled from his luxurious home and an indulgent father, and abandoned the Magian faith in which he had been brought up, first for Christianity, and

later for Islam. He asked Caliph Omar for the hand of one of his daughters, and Omar was willing to grant his request, as he saw no objection to the alliance. His son Abdullah however was very indignant and asked Amr Ibn al'As to help him. When he met Salman, he congratulated him on the fact that the Commander of the Faithful had condescended to give him his daughter and had thereby humiliated himself before God. Salman resented this so much that he withdrew his offer.

The treatment of the subject races who did not accept Islam and were called Zimmis which signifies covenant or guarantee was relatively tolerable. They were called tolerated sects, and by paying the poll-tax attained security for their lives, their honour and property and they consisted of Christians and Jews. To them were also added Zoroastrians. The latter retained their importance in the administration and enjoyed a large amount of prestige with the new rulers. Three centuries after the Persian conquest fire-temples existed in every Persian province. In 1882 a German scholar, Houtum Schindler calculated the total number of fire worshippers in Persia at 8,500 and the total number of fire temples at 23. Lord Curzon gives a detailed account of Parsis in Persia during his visit to that country.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century, when Agha Muhammad Khan, founder of the Kajar dynasty besieged Keiman, the place had 12,000 Zoroastrian families. Arnold has brought out these points in his *Preaching of Islam* and declares, "In the face of such facts, it is surely impossible to attribute the decay of Zoroastrianism entirely to violent conversions made by the Muslim conquerors." The Muslims were enjoined by the Prophet to be kind to the People of the Book and the *Quran* enjoins toleration for such people while the early Caliphs instructed the Arab governors and generals to deal gently with the people of the Covenant. If the people of the country came to them to offer terms of capitulation these should be accepted and an agreement should be signed under which the Muslims should undertake to provide for their protection

<sup>10</sup> Curzon, *Persia*, published in 1892.

against the payment of the poll-tax. If circumstances prevented the Muslims from carrying out their obligation, the poll-tax was to be remitted. A very good example of these covenants is given in the letter of the Prophet to the people of Adhruh and the people of Makna.

### The Prophet's Instructions on the Treatment of Conquered Races

"In the name of God, etc. From Muhammad the Prophet of God to the Banu Habibah and the people of Makna, peace be with you. It has been told me from above that ye are to return to your village and when this letter comes to you, ye shall be safe and ye shall have the guarantee of God and the guarantee of His Prophet, for the Prophet of God has forgiven your sin and any blood for which you might be pursued. You are to have no patron in your village except the Prophet of God, nor shall any do you wrong nor harm you, because the Prophet of God will defend you even as he defends himself: Only to the Prophet of God shall belong your spoils and your slaves and your camp-followers and your cuirasses, save what the Prophet of God or his messenger shall exempt. And thereafter there shall be upon you a fourth of the product of your palms and fourth of the product of your nets, and a fourth of what is spun by your women, and God's Prophet has exempted you from all further poll-tax or forced labour. And if ye hear and obey, then it will be for the Prophet of God to do honour to the honourable that are among you, and to pardon those of you that do wrong. Whosoever of the Banu Habibah and the people of Makna bethinks him to do well to the Moslems it shall be well for him and whosoever means mischief for them, mischief shall befall him. Ye are to have no rulers save of yourselves or of the family of the Prophet. Written by Ali in the ninth year."

*Intermarriage among Arabs.* Islam did not prohibit inter-racial alliances and no objection could be raised on the score of religion. The marriages of Arabs with non-Arab women were quite common. Thus Ali Ibn Hussain, known as Zain-ul-Abdin who was one of the twelve Imams,

had for mother Sulafa, daughter of Yazdigird the last of the Persian kings. When his father died he gave her in marriage to Tharid his father's Client. He manumitted one of his slave girls and married her. The Umayyad Caliph Ibn Marwan rebuked him for this, and Zain-ul'Abidin wrote back "Ye have in the Prophet of God a good example". He manumitted Safiyyad daughter of Huyayy and married her, and manumitted Zaid Ibn Haritha and gave him in marriage his cousin Zaynab.

*Poll-tax.* The Prophet's example was followed by the generals who conquered Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Fars. The Umayyad Caliphs ignored this advice and oppressed not only the people of the covenant by increasing the poll-tax, but also imposed poll-tax upon Muslims. When the Copts found that conversion to Islam would not free them from the poll-tax some of them became monks as monks were exempted from the poll-tax. The Umayyad viceroys, however, imposed the poll-tax upon the monks and some of them were asked to pay poll-tax for their dead relatives as well. The four sources of revenue in the times of the Umayyads were the poll-tax, the land tax, the alms and the tithes. The most important of these sources at the commencement of Islam was the poll-tax. When a very large number of subject races accepted Islam and were thereby exempted from the poll-tax the Umayyad governors proceeded to exact the poll-tax from them even after conversion. Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf, the ferocious governor of Kufa, exacted the poll-tax from the new converts, and he was followed by other Umayyad governors in Africa, Khurasan and Transoxiana. As a result of these severe measures many of these converts apostatized. The inhabitants of Khurasan and Transoxiana did not accept Islam down to the end of the Umayyad period owing to the inequity of the governors who demanded the poll-tax from the converts. When Asad was made governor of Khurasan in the year 110 A. H. the people of Samarkand had apostatized. He agreed that any person who returned to Islam would be exempted from the poll-tax. Many of the inhabitants returned to Islam on this condition. When, however, poll-tax was reimposed on the converts to Islam,

nearly seven thousand persons seceded at a distance of many leagues from Samarkand. This short-sighted policy produced an insurrection in which the people of Sughd and Bukhara apostatized from Islam and the Turks took up arms. When Nasr Ibn Sayyar was appointed governor of Khurasan he repealed this order and issued an edict in the year 121 A.H. which declared that all Muslims were to be exempted from the poll-tax. It was to be imposed upon those non-Muslims who had so far been exempted from it. Within a week thirty thousand non-Muslims who had been paying the poll-tax complied with this order.

*Caliph Omar II.* The only Umayyad Caliph who earnestly tried to propagate Islam, Omar II, did not live long enough to carry out his policy. Dozy in his *Islamism* says that "of all the Umayyads Umar II was the only truly believing and pious prince. He was not moved by pecuniary interest, and was inspired by the example of Omar I to win over non-believers to the faith." His officials found it difficult to adapt themselves to the new policy which contrasted so strongly with the mercenary motives which had guided his predecessors. "If things continue in Egypt as at present," wrote an official to the Caliph, "the Christians will, without exception, embrace Islam, and the state will lose all its revenues." "I should regard it as a great blessing," replied Umar, "if all the Christians were converted, for God sent His Prophet to act as an Apostle, not as a tax-collector." To the governor of Khurasan, who complained that many of the Persians in his provinces had only embraced Islam in order to be exempted from the payment of the poll-tax (*Jaziya*), and that they had not been circumcised, he replied in a similar strain, "God sent Muhammad to make known the true faith unto men, not to circumcise them." He did not interpret too rigorously the prescriptions of the law and conscious of the fact that many conversions were lacking in sincerity, but at the same time he saw with crystalline clarity, that if the children and grandchildren of these converts were brought up as Muslims, they would in due course, become as good, perhaps even better, believers than the Arabs. Omar II also abolished the infamous practice of

the public cursing of Ali in the mosques, and thereby gained the sympathy of all Muslims, including the Shias. The policy pursued by Omar II towards Muslims should be compared with the ferocious proceedings of the notorious Umayyad governor, Hajjaj. The number of persons put to death by Hajjaj is estimated at 1,20,000. It is worth while quoting a part of his address to the people of Kufa to show the cruel nature of the man. "By God; I see glances fixed upon me and necks stretched forward, and heads ripe for the reaping, ready to be cut off, and I am the man to do it." The address shows the nature of the man, and throws a flood of light on the administration of the Umayyads. The violent rival prejudices of the Umayyads doomed their administration, while the personal character of many Umayyad rulers destroyed the moral foundations of their rule. The luxurious habits of the ruling classes necessitated imposition of fresh taxation upon the subject races. Peculation became the rule among the governors in the provinces. It increased to such an extent that *Istikebraj* or the art of squeezing was practised by each new governor on new devices. When other sources of revenue failed, the Umayyad Caliphs sold governorships for cash. When Al Walid Ibn Yazid became Caliph he increased the stipends to attain cheap popularity. But his treasury was empty, and he therefore resorted to the practice of selling the governorship of Khurasan and the subordinate states to Yusuf Ibn Omar, and during his reign, to Athir. Any governorship could be had by a bribe to the Caliph or one of his favourites. When the Caliph wanted to win over a powerful section he would tempt it with a governorship. Yusuf Ibn Omar extracted from his predecessor in the government of Iraq, Khalid al-Kasri, and his men seventy million dirhams, equivalent to nearly two million eight hundred thousand pounds. The wretched peasantry had ultimately to pay this enormous amount.

*Reasons for the Fall of Umayyad Caliphs.* Van Vloten assigns the following reasons for the fall of the Umayyads—

1. The fierce hatred of a subject race, the Persians, towards foreign rulers.



2. The Shi'ite movement or the cult of the descendants of the Prophet.

3. The expectation of a Mahdi or Deliverer.

These were the causes which brought about the fall of the Umayyads. Another cause was the character of the rulers. Muawia was the most sagacious of all the members of the dynasty, and by his princely gifts, kindly treatment and gentleness he won over a large number of his opponents. Yazid, his successor, is execrated throughout Islam. The poet Hafiz has been censured by pious Muslims because he began the first ode in his Diwan with the following verse of Yazid—

*Ana'l-Masumu ma 'indi' bi-tiraqin wa la raqi;*

*Adir ka'san wa nawil-ha, ala'ya ayyuba's-sadi.*

"I, drugged with poison, have neither antidote nor guarding  
charm,

Pass the cup and give it me to drink, O Cup bearer."

Hafiz has never been forgiven for beginning his Diwan with Yazid's verse. That Yazid was cruel, debauched, inefficient and indolent, is admitted by all scholars. However, some European scholars take an unholy pleasure in reversing the verdict of history, and it is not surprising to find that two German scholars, Brunnow and Weil, have written learned monographs to show that Yazid had no other alternative but to follow the policy which his lieutenants pursued at Karbala. Muawia's sagacious policy was reversed by Abd'ul Malik Ibn Marwan who believed in the policy of frightfulness and terror. This is how he addressed the adherents of the Prophet's family in the year 75 A. H., "Please to remember that I am not the weak Caliph (Uthman) nor the flattering Caliph (Muawia), nor the stupid Caliph (Yazid) and that I shall not cajole this nation except with sword until you come into line. You know by heart the acts of the original refugees, but you do know such acts yourself; you enjoin piety on others, but neglect it yourself. No person after today shall enjoin piety upon me, but I will strike off his head." The Caliph Abdul Malik made a great show of

piety before his appointment as governor, and it is stated that when the news of his appointment reached him he was seated with the *Quran* on his lap; he closed it saying "This is our final parting." His lieutenant, Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf, directed catapults against the Kaba, and cut off the head of Ibn Tahir within the Kaba, thus violating the sanctity of the place and infringing a long-established rule that there shall be no fighting in the Kaba or its vicinity. Hajjaj's troops continued the work of slaughter for three days, pulled down the Kaba, though they regarded it as the house of God, and kindled a fire between its precincts and its curtains. Such atrocities have never occurred in any period of Muslim history. Hundreds of companions of the Prophet, Epigoni and others, were butchered by them. This was done deliberately, to bring contempt on the cause of Ali and his party. The Umayyads gave their viceroys a free hand and allowed them to slay and crucify at their pleasure. The heads of the rebels were cut off and carried from place to place. Sometimes the trunk would be crucified in crowded thoroughfares. A storehouse for skulls was arranged in the royal palace where the skulls were kept each in a separate basket. It is not therefore surprising to find that Mukhtar was able to collect a large number of free citizens and Clients in his war of revenge against the Umayyads for the tragedy at Karbala. Let me conclude this account with a quotation from Dozy's *L'Islamisme*, "Thus then the party hostile to Islam (*viz.* the *Muawias*) did not rest until they had subdued the two sacred cities, turned the Mosque of Mecca into a stable, burned the Ka'ba, and inflicted deep humiliation on the descendants of the first Muslims. The Arab tribes which a minority had subdued and compelled to embrace Islam, made it pay dearly for this double success. The whole Umayyad period is nothing else but the reaction and triumph of the pagan principles. The Caliphs themselves were, with one exception, either indifferent or infidels. One of them Walid II (743-744 A. D.), even went so far as to suffer his concubines to take his place in public prayer, and to use the *Quran* as a target for his arrow." The only pious Caliph of this dynasty, Omar II, tried to infuse religious zeal into the administration.



*An Estimate of Omar II's Administration.* The views of European scholars on Omar II are, however, varied. Van Vloten declares that the reforms effected by Omar II have been very unfavourably judged by western scholars. Omar II completely ignored considerations of economic stability and propriety in his desire to imitate the policy of Omar I slavishly. The mistake of Omar II consisted in trying to enact, without substantial modifications, measures which Omar I had deemed necessary. But the times had changed, and the new forces and motives of action as well as the growth in the forces of production which had resulted from the unification of the empire necessitated an entirely different approach to the problem. Enthusiasm for an ideal must never make us forget the claim of prudence and solvency of the state. The granting of lands to the garrisons, and the abolition of annuities, exhausted the treasury of Omar II, and proved most injurious to the financial stability of the Caliphate and his fanaticism and pious folly resulted in the insolvency of his treasury. One of his first acts was to disfigure the great mosque at Damascus, which had been beautifully adorned by Walid on so-called religious grounds. He followed it up by passing a law which threw property relations into irretrievable confusion. In 718-19 A. D. the first year of his rule, he issued an edict which confirmed the possession of landed property which Muslims had acquired prior to this date with the consent of the earlier Caliphs. They were now called upon to pay only the tenth, and not the capitation-tax which was obligatory upon former non-Muslim owners. The law also prohibited the payment of the capitation-tax, which had hitherto been paid by the earlier non-Muslim owners of the land, by Muslims who had taken their place. The latter were called upon to pay only the tenth. The law also provided that every purchase of land concluded by a Muslim, after the year 100 A. H. was null and void. This was the most disastrous measure which was passed by any of the Muawia Caliphs. It destroyed public confidence, disturbed property relations, and seriously affected the finances of the state. It remained in force after the Caliph's death, and was in operation in the time of Caliph Hasham, and it then fell into disquietude.

Omar also passed a law whereby members of tolerated creeds, such as Jews and Christians, could not sell their landed properties, but the Muslims ignored it and continued to purchase land from the subject races. The effects of these measures on the finances of the state were disastrous. Muslims who had acquired properties earlier were in a fortunate position, as they paid no capitation-tax but a large proportion of Muslims were denied the opportunity by this law of acquiring land and were discontented. The Caliph perpetrated other follies. After his accession to the throne, he directed the governors to refund from the treasury all moneys which had been obtained illegally. The inevitable result of this edict was that innumerable demands were made by countless persons for repayment of money which they alleged had been illegally taken from them. The treasury of Iraq was drained and Damascus had to come to the help of a province which had hitherto remitted large sums to the Caliph's treasury. Another measure which drained the finances was a law which provided that Christians after their conversion to Islam, were exempted from the land-tax like Muslims. This exhausted one of the most important sources of public revenue as the land-tax paid by the subject population formed a considerable proportion of the revenue of the state. Finally, all converts to Islam were exempted from the payment of capitation-tax. Omar II also issued an order to all his governors which restricted the employment to Muslims in public offices. He committed a political blunder by showing favouritism towards the bitterest opponents of the Umayyad dynasty and his own family was estranged from him by it. Omar also separated the upper parts of Mesopotamia from Iraq and called it the province of Jazirah. Omar's successor, Yazid II, was a confirmed drunkard and spent most of his time in the harem. Hisham, on the other hand, repaired the mischief which had been done by Omar II, though he had to contend with the growing menace of the tribal fueds, recurring insurrections, and the intrigues and conspiracies of the rival party. In his time an able governor, Khalid Ul Qisri, a Christian convert, was sent to Iraq and a number of non-Muslims were appointed to important government posts.

## Chief Officers under the Caliphs. The Powers of Unlimited Wazir

I shall now deal briefly with the various offices under the Caliphs.

*The Office of the Wazir.* Prof. E. G. Browne, in his *Literary History of Persia* (Vol. I, pp. 255-58), says that the *Wazir* is "commonly derived from the Arabic root '*Wazr*' a burden, because the *Wazir* bears the burden of administration! but the derivation may have been from the Pahlavi *Vi-chir* (from *Vi-Chira* 'to decide,' *gazir* in the Talmud").

On the office of the *Wazir*, Al-Fakhri states, "Before entering more fully into this matter, we must need say a few prefatory words on this subject. I say, then, that the *Wazir* is one who is intermediate between the king and his subjects, so there must needs be in his nature one aspect which accords with the natures of kings, and another aspect which accords with the natures of the common folk, so that he may deal with both classes in such a manner as to secure for himself acceptance and affection; while trustworthiness and sincerity constitute his capital. It is said, 'When the ambassador plays the traitor, policy avails naught'; and it is also said, 'The man belied hath no opinion,' so it is important for him to be efficient and vigorous, and necessary that he should possess intelligence, wariness, cunning and resolution. It is likewise needful that he should be generous and hospitable, that thereby he may incline men's necks to his yoke, and that his thanks may be on the tongue of all; nor can he dispense with gentleness, patience, stability in affairs, dignity, gravity and an authoritative address. Now the rules of the Wazirate were not fixed, nor the laws which govern it set in order, before the dynasty of the Abbasids. Before that time its rules were indeterminate and its laws unsettled; nay, rather each king was surrounded by certain courtiers and relatives and, when any important crisis arose, he took counsel of such as were most sagacious and wise in council, each of whom therefore acted as *Wazir*. But when the Abbasids came to the throne the laws of the Wazirate

were fixed, and the *Wazir* was named *Wazir* having hitherto been secretary (*Katib*) or counsellor (*Mushir*). Lexicographers say that *Wazir* means a 'place of refuge', 'an asylum' and that *Wizr* means burden, so that *Wazir* is either derived from *Wizr* in which case, it means that he bears the burden, 'or from *Wazar*, in which case it means that the king has recourse of his judgment and counsel."<sup>11</sup>

The early *Wazirs* under the Abbasids had a miserable end, and the Wazarat was not a bed of roses. The early Abbasids were fierce, suspicious and ruthless, and they had no hesitation in chopping off heads on bare suspicion. The Caliph Al-Mansur was one of the most ruthless, as he was undoubtedly one of the most efficient, of the Abbasids. The ingratitude with which Abu Muslim Khurasani was treated will be incredible to those who do not know his services to the Abbasid dynasty. The office of *Wazir*, for all the power and dignity which were associated with the office, was a perilous one. Abu Muslim Khurasani entitled *Aminu Ali Muhammad*, 'the Trusted Agent of the Family of Muhammad,' was treacherously murdered by Al Mansur (754-755 A. D.), after he himself had, by order of Saffah, caused Abu Salma, who first bore the title of the *Wazir*, to be assassinated. His successor, Abu'l-Jahm, was poisoned by his master. When he felt the effects of the poison the wretched man rose up to leave the room. The Caliph asked him where he was going and the dying man groaned, "To where thou hast sent me." His death was followed by the rise of the famous Persian family of Barmides who guided the policy of the Caliphate for fifty-two years (752-804 A. D.) Barmak was a title and not a name, and the founder of the family was the high priest of the Fire-temple of Nawbahar at Balkh. The title of the *Wazir* was legally held for the first time by Buwayyid Sultans when they usurped the temporal power of the Caliphs, and left him only the spiritual functions. Under the Seljuk Sultans, the Caliphs temporarily

<sup>11</sup> Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 255. Also Von Kremer, translated by S. Khuda Buksh, *Orient under the Caliphs*, pp. 220-227 and *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Chap. V, by I. H. Qureshi, which deals with the Wazarat under the Delhi Sultans.

ly secured greater power and nominated their own *Wazirs*. The Arab jurists, such as Mawardi, have defined the function of the *Wazir* and have distinguished between the unlimited Wazirate and the limited Wazirate. The *Wazir* who exercised unlimited power was all in all, and he had full authority to make any arrangement he considered necessary without the previous sanction of the Caliph. He could not, however, dismiss officers whom the Caliph had appointed. He appointed officers in the name of the sovereign and sat as a final court of appeal in law suits. Except in the reign of Saffah and Mansur, the Wazir was all-powerful. From the time of Harun-al-Rashid onward, the grand *Wazir* became the most powerful person after the Caliph. When the later Caliphs threw themselves into the debaucheries of their overstocked harems with reckless abandon, the *Wazir* became the most powerful man in the kingdom. The qualifications which the *Wazir* was expected to possess were so many and were so varied that only a man of exceptional ability and character could fulfil them. He must, of course, be an accomplished courtier; he was also expected to be conversant with chess and polo; he was sometimes called upon to play the guitar and to be proficient in mathematics, medicine, astrology, poetry, grammar and history. He was to recite the poems and the tales of chivalry or piety to the delectation of his highly critical audience. The more powerful he became, the greater the envy he aroused, and the greater the number of enemies he made. He may be beheaded on the slightest suspicion by a moody ruler, and his political rivals may get rid of him by assassination. The Ismailis assassinated the great Nizamul-Mulk who had taken repressive measures against them. Persian, Arabic and Indian literature is full of the sagacity and humour of *Wazirs*. The Barmecides figure frequently in the strange tales of Arabian Nights in Harun-al-Rashid's reign, while the old Buzurg *Chemabr* the *Wazir* of the famous king Nushirwan, is a household word in Iran. There is a well-known story in which the famous *Wazir* of Nushirwan seeks rest with the king during a hunting expedition in a ruined building. They hear the conversation of the two owls who have just had a discussion. The owls were discussing the marriage of their

little ones, and had agreed as to the dower, which was to consist of a hundred deserted hamlets. To this the owls added, "May God long preserve our ruling sovereign! for in his glorious reign deserted places will never be wanting, as on account of heavy taxation, the peasants are daily taking to flight." It is said that Nushirwan, when he carefully considered the implications of this conversation, immediately removed all unjust taxes, and the people thanked the wise *Wazir* for his advice.

*Wazir with Limited Powers.* The powers of the *Wazir* with limited powers were restricted as he had no initiative of his own and was expected to carry out the orders of his sovereign. Even so the *Wazir* with limited powers exercised considerable influence upon the Caliph, as all the orders of the Caliph passed through his hands and he had the custody of the seal or signature. Some *Wazirs* lost their position owing to incapacity. Non-Muslims were sometimes appointed limited *Wazirs*. A Jew was actually appointed *Wazir* under the Shi'ite Dynasty of the Ubedites who ruled Africa, and later on, Egypt. An Arab writer, Suyuti, *Husnul Mubadherah* complains, "The Jews of our time have reached the goal of their ambition. To them belong power and authority. Out of them are chosen counsellors and princes. O people of Egypt! I advise you to become Jews, for Heaven itself has become Jewish." The Arab jurists did not regard the appointment of two *Wazirs* with unlimited powers as feasible; this was permitted only when their work and jurisdiction were precisely demarcated. The Wazirate with limited powers was the original form of Wazirate, and the grand *Wazir* appears on the scene only with the decline and decay of the Umayyad Caliphs.

The Abbasid Caliphate attained its splendour under Harun-al-Rashid when the Caliphate was at the height of its power, and Jaffar Barmecide was the acknowledged grand *Wazir* of the empire. It is said that the third Abbasid Caliph declared that an honourable Qazi, a just chief of police, an efficient finance minister and reliable postmaster were the pillars of the government. The Chief police officer, *Sabib-*



*As-Shurtah*, was originally the Commander of the royal body-guard and later on became an important courtier, according to Ibn Khaldun. Every governor had many chief police officers who were charged with the duty of maintaining peace and security within their jurisdiction. Sometimes the post was combined with that of governor, but normally the two posts were kept separate. The Muhtasib was the overseer of the market and censor of public morals. According to Ibn Athir the post was distinct from that of chief police officer.

When the great Saladin put an end to the Fatimide dynasty in Egypt, the first thing he did was to pray in the Cairo Mosque for the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad and supplicate for investiture and a robe of honour from the latter.

The Mameluke Sultans who conquered Egypt after the fall of the Ayyubite dynasty, swore allegiance to the Abbasid dynasty, and after the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258 A. D., the Sultans did their best to call into existence a Caliph to whom they could render homage. Even in the days of their decline when all power had been wrested from them by superior force, and the Caliphate had become a ghost of its former self, there was a halo round the person of the Caliph which no humiliation or decadence could dispel, and Muslims showed the greatest respect and veneration for the Caliphs. No independant potentate was allowed to marry a Caliph's daughter, while the marriage of the Caliph with the daughter of independent Sultans was deemed an honour by the latter. Sultan Tughrilbeg was, however, presumptuous enough to aspire to the hand of Caliph al Kaim's daughter. The Caliph was outraged by the proposal but consented, as he feared deposition by the turbulent barbarian.

After protracted negotiations the Caliph's consent was secured and the marriage took place in 454 A. H. Tughrilbeg was allowed to see his bride a year later, when he kissed the ground before her. The bride sat on a throne covered with gold, and never removed the veil from her

face, nor rose up to receive him. For days the wretched bridegroom would pay visits in this manner, and would then go away. The marriage was never consummated as Tughrilbeg died in the same year. It is significant that the Abbasid Caliphs were Arabs, and no non-Arab succeeded as a Caliph until Sultan Salim II the Ottoman induced the last of the Abbasid Caliph who had been invited to Egypt by the Mamelukes, to yield his rights to the Ottoman monarch in 933 A. H. From that time the Caliphate was vested in the reigning dynasty of Ottoman Turks, until Mustafa Kamal Pasha abolished it in 1922. Mamardi a great constitutional jurist, has specified the following qualifications for electors, who were called upon to elect a Caliph:

(a) spotless purity, (b) capacity for judging the qualifications for leadership of the State, (c) insight and judgment to decide which of the candidates is most suited to conduct the government and to assume the charge of affairs.

The inhabitants of Baghdad had no pre-eminence over the rest of the people; but practice, not legal theory, granted them this right, since the inhabitants of the capital were informed of the death of the Caliph sooner than those of the country, they would proceed with the election without waiting for the acquiescence of electors of other parts of the Empire. Further, the persons likely to succeed in the contest mostly resided there.



### CHAPTER III

## THE CALIPHATE—ITS ROLE AND NATURE

*The Caliphate and Sovereignty.* Contrary to popular belief there is no necessary connection between the Caliphate and sovereignty or between religion and politics. It is true that at the commencement of Islam the Prophet was chief of the Muslims in temporal and spiritual concerns, as he was their ruler, judge, law-giver, priest and general. When he appointed any of his followers commander of a province, he vested him with both forms of sovereignty, spiritual and temporal, and charged him with the duty of carrying out the precepts of the *Quran*. Later on, however, he separated the two functions and assigned them to different persons. Thus in the year 8 A. H. he sent Abu Zaid al-Ansari and 'Amr Ibn al-As together with a rescript inviting people to embrace Islam. And his instruction to them was as follows: "If the people are ready to pronounce the creed, and ready to obey God and His Apostle, then Amr is to be governor and Abu Zaid to lead the prayer, as also to receive admission into Islam and to teach the *Quran*."

In some cases the same person was appointed to act governor, to collect the land-tax, manage military operations as well as lead the prayers. It is nevertheless true that the Caliphate in its origin was a religious office, and the main work of the Caliph was to expand Islam and fight the world in its cause. In the performance of these duties they were obliged to undertake the administration of conquered territories and this led to the appointment of the governors and the collection of land-tax. Formally, it was for the propagation of Islam that they conquered countries and led armies against non-Muslims. Pious Muslims indeed differentiated the Caliph from the temporal ruler and when the astute Muawia tried to acquire temporal power they were strongly opposed to his plan and refused to take the oath of allegiance. Only after Ali had been killed and his son

had resigned his claims to Muawia, did the Muslims consent to pay homage to him just as they might pay to a king. They were, however, strongly opposed to giving him the title of Caliph, nor were they prepared to acknowledge his spiritual sovereignty. The Umayyads would never have obtained supremacy had they not assumed the title of Caliph and acquired the spiritual headship thereby. Their temporal sovereignty was confirmed and reinforced by their spiritual prerogatives, which were inherent in the office of the Caliph. Some of the Umayyad Caliphs exploited this office for self-aggrandisement, and exalted the Caliphate to such an extent that they even set it above the office of the Prophet, calling the Caliph God's Caliph (or vicegerent), with the statement that a man's representative in his household is grander than the messenger whom he sends on an errand. When the Caliphate was acquired by the Abbasids, Muslims were more inclined to obey them than the Umayyads. Muslim writers, such as Athir, Fakhari, Masudi, inform us that the people believed that the Abbasid Caliphs would last for ever and an idea was prevalent in men's mind that if an Abbasid Caliph were killed the order of the Universe would be disturbed, the Sun would be darkened, the rains would stop, and vegetation would dry up. There is a story that Sa'd Ibn Abi Wakkas presented himself before Muawia, after the sovereignty of the latter had been confirmed, and saluted him as a king. Muawia laughing, asked him what harm it would have done Sa'd to have used the title Commander of the Faithful? Sa'd's answer was: "What, can you talk of this with a smile? I assure you that I had rather not have the post if it was to be acquired as you acquired it."

*The Caliphate and Fakihs.* The theory of the Caliphate received strong support from the Fakihs or Traditionalists and the alliance between the Caliphs and lawyers was cemented by the mutual support which each rendered to the other. Only those persons were appointed to high judicial posts who were whole-hearted supporters of the Caliph's power. The jurists and the *Fakihs* thereby acquired great power, and from the time of Caliph Mutawakkil onward they

exercised supreme influence both in the East and the West. The Umayyad Caliphs sometimes tortured and coerced lawyers and *Fakihs* if they showed independent spirit. Free thought was banned, and men's tongues were sealed. While the first four Caliphs had invariably consulted the jurists of Medina, the Umayyads studiously neglected both Medina and its jurists. Only Omar II attempted to revert to the practice of Omar I. Under the Abbasids the jurists acquired great influence and boldly addressed the Caliph. I have already quoted the letter which Sufyan al Thawri addressed to Harun-al-Rashid. The Abbasid Caliphs required the help of the jurists, while the jurists gained money and position by flattering the Caliphs. In this transaction the Caliphs got more than the jurists. The theory of the Caliphate was now transformed into a creed, in which respect for the Caliphs was an integral part of religion and the obedience of the people was assured by the alliance between the Caliph and the *Fakihs*. Moreover, the Caliphs made an ostentatious display of piety and zeal to enhance their popularity among the people and never failed to show great respect for jurists and holy men.

According to Aghani, the Umayyad Caliph Al-Walid Ibn Yazid, a notorious debauchee and loose liver, is said, when the hour for prayer arrived, to have been in the habit of throwing off his dyed and scented garments, after which he would perform the appointed ablution in the proper fashion, and put on a clear white garment such as the Caliphs were in the habit of wearing, and then lead the prayer in the most approved style, with correct enunciation, and correct pauses, stops and prostrations. When he had finished he would resume his festive attire.<sup>12</sup>

The awe and veneration which the Caliphate inspired induced many potentates who became independent, to request the Caliph to send them a robe of honour and some honorific title, just as the independent subedars of India used to ask the decadent Mughal emperors for a *Farman* which will legalise their usurpation. The analogy between the Abbasid Caliphate and the Mughal Empire in India, in their days of decadence, is very close.

12 Jurji Zaydan, pp. 248-256.

The spiritual functions of the Caliph were separated from temporal functions when the Mameluke Sultans established their rule in Egypt, and when the Caliphate was extinguished at Baghdad and the Caliph Mustasin was killed by the Mongols, the Mameluke Sultans searched for the Abbasid relatives who had taken refuge in Cairo, and recognised one of them as a Caliph. Their functions were purely spiritual in this period, and it was not till the last Caliph resigned his claim to Sultan Salim, after his conquest of Egypt, in the year 933 A. H., that the temporal and the spiritual functions were again combined in the Caliphate. From this time onward the Turks assumed the responsibility of the Caliphate. The Turkish Empire became, consequently, the most powerful expression of the later Islamic civilisation.

*The Governor.* In the time of the early Caliphs most of the governors exercised unlimited powers, and they performed both the spiritual and temporal functions of the Caliph. They led the prayers and preached in the Friday mosques. In early times it was impossible to demarcate their functions with precision, but from the time of Muawia onward the powers of governors were restricted. Everything, however, depended upon the personality of the Caliph. If the Caliph was vigilant and able, he had no difficulty in keeping in check the powers and authority of the governors. If, on the other hand, the Caliphate was weak, and the Caliph was sunk in sloth, the governors assumed not only unlimited powers but also independence of the Caliph's authority. In the decline of the Caliphate many governors became independent sovereigns and founded their dynasties. There is a close analogy between the reign of the later Mughals in India and the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate from the tenth century onward. Governors were deposed by the Caliph and Mansur was in the habit of confiscating the property of such governors. The deposition, recall or transfer of governors depended upon the whim and fancy of the Caliphs. Mansur imposed upon Khalid Ibn Baramak, who had been appointed governor of Mosul, payment of three million dirhams in three days. The unlimited governorship passed into governorship by usurpation. The Caliphs

who were powerless in the outlying parts of the empire, bowed to the inevitable and confirmed adventurers, who had been successful in their rebellion, in their position just as the later Mughals granted *Farmans* to adventurers in northern and southern India. The governors were called upon to acknowledge the Caliph as the spiritual head of Muslims, and do homage to him as a sovereign. A tribute was paid by all governors to the Caliph. The position of governors was greatly strengthened by their treaties with the Caliph as their legitimate sovereign. The independent principalities which were formed in Fars, Khurasan, Turkistan, Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt and Africa, prior to the foundation of the Fatimide Caliphate in Egypt, were all in the hands of the princes who delivered the *Khutba* in the name of the Caliph of Baghdad, and sent him fixed annual payments though the Caliphs had lost all power and authority and were under the rule of their Turkish guards. The adventurers who had become founders of dynasties were obliged for the maintenance of their own authority to render homage to the Caliph. When therefore any potentate wished to make his principality independent, he would supplicate to the Caliph at Baghdad for a deed of investiture or a certificate that he was governor of the country, or else request him to send him a robe of honour and some honorary title. "The conduct of the Turkish guards and their commanders was similar. Though they had complete control of the Caliphs, and could depose them or put them to death, they did not venture to leave the office of Caliph unfilled for a single day, believing, doubtless, that without a Caliph they could never, satisfy the people"<sup>13</sup>

*The Governors with unlimited powers.* The governor with the unlimited power exercised the following functions. He had the supreme direction of the military affairs of his province (if no special commander-in-chief had been appointed), the stationing and distribution of troops and the fixing of the scales of their pay, unless the Caliph specially controlled and himself assigned the pay of the soldiers; (2) supervision over the nomination of judges (Qazis); (3) the levying of

taxes and imposts and appointment of tax-gatherers, as well as the apportioning of taxes; (4) the maintenance of public security and the preservation of spiritual matters from any innovation; (5) administration of the police, which was divided into two branches, one attending to the public morals, and the other maintaining law and order; (6) presiding at public prayers on Fridays and on festival days; (7) equipment and despatch of the annual pilgrim caravans proceeding to Mecca; (8) the waging of war against unbelievers (if his province adjoined an enemy's territory) and (9) the distribution of booty among the soldiers as well as levying of one-fifth legally belonging to the state treasury. The pay of the soldiers could not be enhanced by the governor, but if, for reasons sufficiently weighty, like famine or some other unforeseen event, the governor found himself constrained to enhance the pay of the soldiers, he could do so without the sanction of the Caliph, but such an arrangement was purely temporary. It was, however, perfectly within the competence of the governor to assign annuities to the grown-up sons of soldiers, or to offer rewards to soldiers independent of the Caliph's consent.

After defraying all the expenses of the provincial administration and the pay of the soldiers, if any funds remained in the hands of the governor, he was to return them to the Caliph; but, as a matter of fact, the revenue was never sufficient for troops, and the governor had invariably to get the deficit from the central treasury.<sup>14</sup> The death of the wazir who had unlimited powers put an end to the terms of office of all governors appointed by him unless they were confirmed afresh in their posts.

*The Governors with limited powers.* Governor with limited powers exercised control over provincial military affairs, the conduct of the administration and the maintenance of order. He had no control over the administration of justice, nor could he interfere with the levying of taxes and imposts. His powers over criminal matters were limited, and all crimes which infringed religious laws were tried

14 Khuda Bukhsh, *The Orient under the Caliphs*, pp. 272-274.



by Qazi. The governor's jurisdiction over other crimes was limited to cases in which the aggrieved party complained before him. He was entitled to give his decisions in appeals if a judicial sentence had already been pronounced. This is an obscure passage in Mawardi, and it is not clear whether the governor acted as the final court of appeal in specified cases. It was settled on the appointment of each governor whether he had the right to preside at public prayers. The governor who was vested with this right was regarded as the highest representative of the government.

*Governorship by Usurpation.* The third kind of governorship was the governorship by usurpation. Muslim jurists declared that the following conditions must be fulfilled before the governor could be regarded as legitimate :

1. He must respect the dignity of the Caliph as the supreme religious head of Islam.
2. He must publicly avow religious submission to the Caliph.
3. He must render assistance and help in all matters of common interest to Islamic world, so as to show Muslim solidarity.
4. He must respect the nominations made by the Caliph to important religious offices, such as Qazis and *Imams*.
5. He must see that the taxes imposed in accordance with the *Shariat* were enforced in a spirit of moderation.
6. He must see that criminal justice was impartially administered.
7. Finally he must take every step to maintain the true religion. It is unnecessary to state that very few governors who had usurped principalities observed all the conditions specified above, and most were content to acknowledge religious submission to the Caliph as this was the most important means for the consolidation of their dynasty.

*Military Administration of the Caliphs.* Muslim jurists regard the main object of the military organisation to be *Jehad*, in other words, war against infidels. The command of the troops was also based on distinctions between limited and unlimited powers, as it was in the case of the Wazir and the Governor. The commander with limited power was entrusted with the command of troops and the military operations, while the commander with unlimited power exercised not merely the command of his troops, but had control over all matters connected with the administration of the army, such as the division of booty and the right of concluding peace. The troops were divided into two classes, namely the regular army, which was paid from the state treasury and was entered upon the army register, and volunteers *Muttawwiah* consisting of Bedouins, peasants, and city-folk who took part in the war voluntarily from patriotic or religious motives. The latter did not receive any fixed pay though they received assistance from the poor-tax. Muslim soldiers had the right to kill their unbelieving opponents whom they had vanquished in war or captured them by some other device. They were not allowed to kill women, children, slaves or servants. Some jurists opine that the aged, the monks and the clergy should not be killed; while others differ on this point. According to Mawardi, if women and children took part in the war they could be killed, so long as they were actually engaged in fighting; If they took to flight then they should be spared.

*The Duties of the Commander-in-Chief.* The duties of the commander-in-chief need not be specified here. Besides the purely military duty of destroying the enemy, it was his duty to keep up the struggle against the unbelievers, and he was to cease it only until the enemy accepted Islam, and was granted rights and duties with the rest of the Muslims, or was reduced to subjection, or submitted, on the payment of the tribute, to the Muslim ruler and sought his protection. The principles which regulated the conduct of war need not be detailed here. If the infidel accepted Islam on the battlefield, he was to be guaranteed security of person, and property; if, on the other hand, he was vanquished by



force of arms he became a prisoner and could be sold as a slave. Muslims were not permitted to put hostages to death even if the infidel committed a breach of the treaty. Women who had accepted Islam were not to be restored to their husbands, though they were not allowed to retain their dower. The enemy could be killed, but he was not to be burnt or mutilated. Those who had apostatized were to be killed, even if they went over to a religion which was tolerated by the state, and the property of the apostate was forfeited to the government. No agreement could be concluded with the apostates. As regards sectaries and dissenters from the orthodox creed in individual cases, administrative measures were to be adopted to win them over. If they had set up an organisation for the purpose of propagating their views they were to be left unmolested so long as they remained loyal to the government and performed their civil duties. If, on the other hand, they refused to pay taxes to the government, or chose an *Imam*, then military measures were to be adopted against them. Mawardi states that even in such cases some consideration should be shown to them, and they should not be treated as unbelievers. As regards robbers, the *Quran* has prescribed punishment for them. They could be killed or crucified, or might have their hands or feet cut off, or be banished. Another important functionary under the Abbasids was superintendent of posts. He not only maintained regular connections in different parts of the empire, he also supplied information to the central government on the activities of suspicious characters. The superintendents served as intelligence officers, and were essential to the state. The espionage system was highly developed, and the central government was kept in touch with the underground activities of rebels and schismatics.<sup>15</sup>

*How far is Mawardi a reliable guide.* I have quoted extensively from Mawardi in discussing the functions and

<sup>15</sup> The whole of this account is based upon Kremer, who has mainly followed Mawardi on the subject. A summary of Kremer will be found in *Orient under the Caliphs*, Chapter VI. My account is based on Kremer, and I have used the English translation throughout.

powers of the wazir, the governor and the commander-in-chief and other functionaries of the administration. Von Kremer and other European scholars have relied mainly upon Mawardi, Fakhri and others for their account of constitutional law and convention. Mawardi, however, set up an ideal which was not always realised in practice. He treats constitutional law as rigid and inflexible, and makes no allowance for considerable variations in practice. The history of the Umayyads and of the Abbasid Caliphs after Mamun shows, however, considerable changes in the structure of constitutional convention. In his treatment of war against the infidels, he does not take into account the new spirit of chivalry which animated the Arabs in their incessant conflicts with Christians in Spain. There is no evidence to show that Muslims in Spain were rigid in the application of precepts which had been inculcated against unbelievers in the early period of Islam. Finally, it must be pointed out that Muslim criminal law propounded in the early stage of Islam was appreciably influenced by Roman law which was in operation, in a debased form, in many parts of Spain.

### **Administration of Justice : the Powers and Duties of Qazis**

Justice was administered by the Qazis who were either appointed by the Caliph direct, or by the governors who were invested with this power. This subject is discussed comprehensively by Ibn Qutelia. Before a person could be appointed Qazi, he must fulfil the following conditions :

1. He must be a man, and must have attained his majority. Muslim jurists were not agreed on the question whether a woman could exercise the functions of a judge. Abu Hanifa contended that a woman could act as a judge only in those cases in which her testimony was legally admissible. Abu Jarir Tabari declared on the other hand that a woman could be appointed a judge without any restrictions.

2. The Qazi must be mentally sound.
3. He must be a free citizen.

A slave was therefore ineligible for the office, though even a slave was allowed to give legal opinion on *Fatwa*.

4. A judge must be a Muslim. An infidel could not, therefore, be appointed a judge. Abu Hanifa, who is distinguished for his moderation and commonsense, conceded that an infidel could exercise judicial authority over his co-religionists, but his decision could have no binding force.

5. The integrity of the judge must be above suspicion.

6. The judge must be free from all physical defects of sight or hearing. Malik, however, thinks that blindness would not be regarded as a ground for exclusion.

7. The judge must be learned in law, and must have both theoretical and practical knowledge of the subject. According to Mawardi, a judge could be appointed either by a written or verbal nomination by the sovereign, but consent of the person nominated was essential. In all such appointments the jurisdiction of the judge was to be precisely indicated, and his appointment was to be officially announced. The sovereign could deprive the judge of his office and the latter could also resign his post.

*Qazi with unlimited powers.* Like all high offices the power of the Qazi was either general or limited. A Qazi who was vested with general authority had the power—

1. To decide cases either by arbitration or by judicial pronouncement.

2. When the case had been established by admission or by evidence the Qazi called upon the defaulting party to satisfy the judgment entered against him.

3. The Qazi was given the power to appoint guardians for persons who were mentally incapable of managing their property, such as lunatics, minors, idiots, imbeciles.

4. A most important function of the Qazi was to administer and supervise *Waqf* properties.

5. The Qazi was also charged with the execution of wills of deceased persons.

6. The Qazi was also entrusted with arrangements for the remarriage of widows.

7. Another important function of the Qazi was to prescribe punishments for infringements of religious laws. All violation of municipal laws could be decided by the Qazi on a complaint being brought before him.

8. It was also a duty of the Qazi to maintain supervision of streets and buildings within his jurisdiction. He in fact performed many of the functions of the mayor of the town, besides that of the judge, and it was his duty to see that the streets and open spaces were not disfigured by unauthorised buildings.

9. He had moreover the duty of supervising the subordinate law-officers and sub-judges within his jurisdiction.

10. Finally, he was to show exemplary impartiality, and dispense strict justice in adjudicating the cases between the poor and the rich, high and low. If no special collector of poor-tax had been appointed, the Qazi was called upon by virtue of his office to collect this tax, which was called *Sadekah*, and distribute it among persons who were legally entitled to it. According to the *Quran* Sura IX verse 60, the alms are to be given to the poor and needy and those who collect them, and to those whose hearts are won to Islam; for ransom, debt and for the cause of God and the wayfarer. If no special officer was appointed by the sovereign, the Qazi was to preside over Friday prayers.

*Qazi with limited powers.* The Qazi with limited judicial powers was restricted in his duties which were clearly specified. He could only adjudicate cases where proof was furnished by way of confession or cases of debt, but he had no jurisdiction over issues concerning marital rights, and other issues connected therewith. The Qazi was strictly prohibited from accepting presents from any of the parties to the suit or any other person living within his jurisdiction. He was expected to decide the cases expeditiously and not to pass judgment in cases which affected his parents and children. Moreover he was not allowed to give evidence against his enemy, though he could do so in his favour.

*Nazar-ul-Mazalim.* Some account should be given here of a unique institution which the Arabs developed. This was *Nazar-ul-Mazalim* or the Board for the inspection of grievances. This was a characteristic institution of the Arab race, and it functioned successfully in many countries. King Roger, the Norman ruler of Sicily imitated this, as well as other institutions of the Arabs. The object of the Board was to deal with cases in which miscarriage of justice had occurred. Only a person who enjoyed great influence and prestige could act as president of such a Board.

*The Constitution of the Board.* The Caliph Abdul Malik was the first Muslim ruler who personally heard appeals and received complaints. Omar II, who modelled himself upon Caliph Omar I, occupied himself with complaints of oppression or injustice which were made to him. The Delhi Sultans also established such a Board, and it seems to have been very popular with the public. The Abbasid Caliphs Mehdi, Hadi, Harun and Mamun, heard such complaints in the public audience. According to Mawardi, Muhtadi was the last Caliph who kept up the old custom. Later on, the Board was administered by an officer especially appointed for this purpose. Under the Caliph Muqtadir the authority to hear petitions and complaints was given to the Mistress of the Robes of the Caliph's mother. The latter usually held her sittings every Friday, and she had jurists, judges and notabilities to advise her on the complaints made to her. The president of the Board generally allotted a day for hearing such complaints, and his office included, among other functionaries, judges and administrative officers for discussing legal arguments and judicial procedure; jurists who were noted for their thorough knowledge of some aspects of the law involved, and recorders whose duty it was to certify the judgments and directions of the Court. Mawardi enumerates the duties of the chief officers of the Board. They comprised investigation into the misuse of authority by the executive; supervision of officers of the chancery and the finance department; supervision and control of *Waqf* properties; return of properties which had been illegally acquired; supervision over the payment of salary

to the troops, execution of those judicial decisions which could not be enforced. The Board had, moreover, the powers of supervision of the officers who were charged with the maintenance of public order, and the upholding of moral principles such as services on Fridays, pilgrimages, festival days and the *Jehad*. It was, moreover, the duty of the Board to see that the decisions of the Qazi were in consonance with the law then in force. The president of the Board was not bound to decide any dispute immediately, and he could defer his decision until all the material was placed before him. The procedure adopted by the Board was very elastic and many Muslim jurists have discussed this subject extensively. The position of the president of the Board was much higher than that of the Qazi as the latter was under the president's jurisdiction, who could decide legal disputes himself, or refer them to the Qazi for decision or appoint an arbitrator for the purpose. He was not bound by the strict letter of the law, and was generally guided by principles of equity.

*The Prefect of Police.* The Prefect of Police or Muhtasib, was charged with the duty of seeing that improper weights and measures were not used. It was his duty to prevent fraud and to compel the debtors to pay their debts. The Muhtasib was not called upon to decide judicial matters unless the accused made a confession of his guilt. When, however, expressly authorised, he combined the functions of a judge and a Muhtasib. When the accused denied the charge brought against him, the jurisdiction of the Muhtasib ended, and that of the Qazi began. The functions of the Qazi and the Muhtasib were precisely demarcated. While the Muhtasib had the power to take action without receiving a complaint, the Qazi could only do so upon an application being made to him. The duty of the Muhtasib consisted in the maintenance of law and order and preservation of good morals. It was his duty to see that prayers were conducted in the prescribed form and innovation avoided; he was also expected to uphold existing institutions and to issue regulations which were conducive to security and peace. He was also charged with the duty of finding suit-



able husbands for widows, and it was one of his functions to see that no divorced woman married before the expiration of the legal period, *Iddah*. He was, moreover, expected to deal with all complaints regarding paternity, and he was charged with the protection of servants, and owners of beasts of burden from cruel treatment. He was also expected to care for the foundings, to forbid visits to the questionable quarters of the town, and to prevent men showing themselves with women on streets and public places. He was not only the chief police officer, but also the censor of morals, and it was his duty to check improper behaviour in public places. He had, however, no right to enter private houses and he could only do so if he had information that an offence was committed or was likely to be committed. It was also his duty to see that the trade laws as well as laws against usury were strictly enforced. The Muhtasib was called upon to enforce the law which had been issued by some Caliphs by which the Christians wore the *Jhivar*, which was a yellow piece of cloth which Christians and Jews had to fasten on their clothes to distinguish them from Muslims. He had the right to punish Muslims for slandering or ill-treating persons of other faith. The Umayyad Caliphs of Cordova appointed an official who was charged with the special protection of persons and interests of Jews and Christians. I have not exhausted the duties of the Muhtasib. It is clear that Baghdad which was the capital of Islamic world with a population of a million inhabitants containing a congeries of races and creeds from all parts of Asia and Europe, required a most efficient and vigilant police. Mawardi informs us that the prefect of police was expected to watch the dress and outward appearance of the public and he was authorised to punish men who dyed their grey beards black in order to gain the favours of ladies. From the list given here, it is clear that the office of Muhtasib was the pivot round which the entire city administration revolved. Upon him depended not only law and order in the city but good morals among citizens, and tranquillity in the administration. He had wider functions than those of the Kotwal under the Mughal emperors of India. Military officers and



warriors taking part in religious wars were, presumably as a concession, permitted to dye their hair. I may add that the dyeing of the beard with *benna* or *katan* was not prohibited, and many persons did so.

*The Rights and Duties of Postmasters under the Caliphate.* We have yet to discuss an institution quite characteristic of the Caliphate, *viz.* that of the Postmaster (*Sahib-ul-Barid*). The name is anything but descriptive of the office, which was quite different from what we understand by it. A more accurate description perhaps would be: General Reporter, or Chief of the State Police. It corresponds to an office which some years ago was introduced in Turkey under the title of 'The Controller' (*Mufettish*) but which, as a matter of fact, did very little good. In all the administrative districts of the Turkish Empire, which were called *Walayat*, and which to some extent correspond geographically to the governorship of the Caliphate, a *Mufettish* was sent along with the Governor-General, who had to supervise the general administration, confirm certain acts by giving his signature, and furnish information to the central government. The Controller exercised indeed some check upon the Governor-General. But this arrangement proved ineffective, because the *Mufettish*, instead of making himself hostile to the Governor-General by forwarding correct reports, preferred to be friendly with him, and allowed things to drift. The favours of the Governor-General were more profitable to him than perhaps the uncertain recognition which he might obtain by his correct reports, at Constantinople. The Sublime Porte later on devised another means of control. It sent into the provinces special government reporters under the title of 'Gurnaly.' The result of this measure is equally open to doubt, as the control and supervision remains worthless until the sense of duty and honour is strongly developed in officers. Even honourable and loyal officers cannot for long maintain or preserve a decaying government. But all control is worthless without this preliminary condition. A similar, but far more trustworthy, position was that of the Chief Postmaster. At the headquarters of each of the large provinces of which the mighty

empire was composed, was a Postmaster, whose duty was to keep the Caliph continually informed of all important affairs. The Postmaster had even to supervise the action of the Governor and was, so to speak, a direct confidential agent appointed by the central government. The report of Chief Postmaster of Baghdad, at the time of the Caliph Mutawakkil, has come down to us. The Governor of Baghdad had gone on pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, to discharge the obligation of pilgrimage, and had bought there a beautiful slave girl, with whom he had passionately fallen in love. He tried his very best to keep this matter a secret, but the Chief Postmaster heard of it, and sent the following report to the Caliph, who was then at a distance of four *farasangs* from the capital in one of his country palaces :

"In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate O, Prince of the Faithful ! Muhammad Ibn Abdullah has purchased a slave girl for 1,00,000 dirhams. He amuses himself with her from noon to night and neglects the affairs of the state. The Prince of the Faithful would not like to see Baghdad in an uproar, for then the Prince of the Faithful would have difficulty in restoring order. The most abject slave reports this to the Prince of the Faithful, whom may God strengthen. Peace and mercy and the blessing of Allah be upon him !" We possess the account of the Postmaster of Khurasan under the Caliph Mamun, who was present at that remarkable sermon in which Tahir, the powerful governor of that country, at the Friday sermon in the great Mosque, before the assembled populace, intentionally excluded the name of the reigning Caliph and substituted his own.

"The Postmaster straightway hastened from the mosque to his house, wrote out his report and despatched it through a hurrying messenger. It was not long, however, before the Governor had him overtaken. The reporter thought himself dead, but a sudden and unexpected occurrence put an end to Tahir's life, and the loyal agent of the Caliph thus escaped death."

We even know the form of appointment of a Postmaster. The Caliph commissions him therein to report

from time to time on the condition of the finance and the administration of the crownlands, the state of agriculture, the affairs of the peasants, the conduct of the magistrates, and matters connected with the coinage. He was also to be present at the review of the troops.

We see thus that the postal system, in our sense of the word, was quite a secondary consideration. It is remarkable and affords an evidence of the fairly developed system of government, that in the commission to the Postmaster it is recommended that he should not in his report mix up different affairs, but treat each branch of the administration separately, so that the report might be forwarded to the proper department. It does appear, as Sprenger points out, that "the reports sent in were forwarded by the Caliph to the different departments." It is sure enough that the post did not go on fixed days and hours, but only as and when the government affairs required. That it did carry private letters is probable, but it is certain that there was no postal institution for the use of the public, but it was exclusively for government service. For the despatch of letters both horses and carriers were used. The latter appears to have been the case in Persia, where postal stations, as stated by Qudama, were at much shorter distances than in Syria and Arabia, where the postal messengers used camels. The relays had to be pretty strong, since they were used for personal transport also. Thus a governor went, along with his retinue, by mail to the province assigned to him, and even troops were sent in this way, as we have already mentioned.

"Throughout the Empire, postal relays were quartered at fixed distances, thus connecting the provinces with the capital. Mahdi, in the year 165 A. H. arranged such a postal course from Yaman to Mecca, and from Mecca to Baghdad. In order to distinguish the postal from private horses their tails were shorn in a particular manner. Ibn Khurdedbah, who himself filled the office of the Postmaster-General under the Caliph Mutamid, says that in the central empire there were 930 stages. The cost of feeding the animals, the purchase of new ones, the salary of postmen and postal

officials, amounted in his time to 154,000 dinars yearly (about 2-1/3 million Francs).” Under the Umayyad Caliph Hisham, the postal expenses of the provinces of Iraq, alone amounted to 4 million dirhams. At the residence of the Caliph there was a postal Diwan. All despatches from the province had to pass through the hands of this Diwan. He had to place before the Caliph the reports of the Postmaster and other correspondence, and when necessary to make extracts from them. Further, it was his duty to appoint postal officials in all the provincial towns, to exercise a general supervision, and to see to the payment of their salary. They had in Baghdad very accurate postal itineraries of the whole empire, in which all the stations were noted, and the distance from one to another carefully marked. The oldest geographical works of the Arabs used these postal directories as a basis. The quickness with which great distances were traversed by postal carriers leaves nothing to desire. An apparently overdrawn and exaggerated item of information is preserved, to the effect that a carrier in three days traversed a distance of 250 *farasangs*, about 750 English miles; implying thereby that he did 10 English miles an hour. In 20 days the postal carrier rode from Jurjan to Baghdad. Even pigeons were used for carrying news at an early date. In later times, under the Caliph Nasir, they seem to have been in great requisition. As regards administrative measures under the Abbasids, it is necessary to mention the introduction of the Board of Administration (*Diwan-ul-Zamimah*); a measure adopted by the Caliph Mahdi. We possess, however, no information regarding its work. We are unable, to ascertain whether it exercised control generally over the conduct of affairs, or whether it had merely to do with regular book-keeping. As under the Umayyads, so also under the Abbasids, the Central Treasury (*Diwan-ul-Khiraj*) carried on the most important functions. Its duty was to receive direct the land tax of Iraq, the most important province of the Empire, and to keep an account of the taxes which came in from other provinces. With the levying of taxes, not unfrequently another office, namely that of the supply of natural products, was coupled.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Kretmer, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 229-36.

*Muslim Conception of Sovereignty.* In Islam the functions of the priest and the sovereign are combined in the same person, and the Prophet united in himself the functions of the ruler and spiritual chief. In the golden age of the first four Caliphs, there was no rule of hereditary succession, and Caliph Abu-Bakr was chosen by the general homage of the Muslim community. The Arabs were guided in their choice chiefly by seniority and nobility of birth in the election of their chief. The succession of Omar had been effected by his nomination as Caliph, and when Omar was wounded, he appointed a regency consisting of leaders of the principal tribes, and specially enjoined his son Abdullah who was a member of the regency, not to give a casting vote, and not to stand as a candidate for the Caliphate. This fact shows conclusively that the idea of hereditary succession was not followed by the Muslims of that period and it was foreign to the traditions of the Arabs. Ali was the fourth Caliph, and the fact that he was passed over three times, shows that the principle of hereditary succession was not accepted by the Arabs. The Umayyads were wedded to hereditary principle, but the Arabs adhered to the elective principle, at least in theory and when Muawia called himself Commander of the Faithful, Sa'd Ibn Wakkas protested, "May God retaliate upon Muawia for he was the first who converted this thing (rule over the faithful) into a *Mulk*." Of the fourteen rulers of the Umayyad dynasty only four were able to appoint their sons as their successors. Similarly, of the first twenty-four Abbasid Caliphs, only six were able to appoint their sons as their successors. The rule of succession was never clearly settled, and election by the people or nomination of successor by the reigning sovereign was essential. Hence election and homage were the spiritual ties that bound the people to the sovereign. The Umayyad Caliph Yazid II justified the murder of Walid II on the ground that he was a self-willed tyrant and indulged in every form of heresy. The clearest expression of the principle that should guide a Caliph in the administration of his realm was contained in the manly protest of Sufyan-al-Thauri whom Harun invited to Baghdad.

"I write to tell thee that I break off all ties with thee, and renounce thy love, and that thou hast rendered me a witness against thee in that thou hast in thy letter confessed against thyself that thou hast pounced on the treasury of the Muslims, and expended what was therein where it was not due, and sent to such as had not right to it; and not content with what thou didst at a distance from me, thou didst even write to me to make me a witness against thyself; and such witness do I now bear, as do all my brethren such as saw thy letter, and on the morrow we shall present our witness against thee before God the Just Judge. O Harun, hast thou verily pounced on the treasury of the Muslims without their leave? Hast thou for this the assent of those whose hearts are united and those that are set in authority there-over in God's earth, and those that fight in God's path, and the son of the road? Hast thou the assent of them that carry the *Quran* in their minds and the men of 'Knowledge'? Has thou the assent of the widows and the orphans, or of any class of thy subjects?"<sup>17</sup> This beautiful passage shows the rugged independence of some of the Muslim divines; it proves conclusively that the autocratic power of the Caliphs was checked by enlightened Ulemas some of whom acted as the real leaders of public opinion. Sufyan refused to salute Mahdi as Caliph, when he called upon him. Caliphs Mansur, Rashid, Mutassim, and Wathik, when visited by jurists and ascetics would request a sermon from them, which, when delivered, would cause them to weep until their beards were wetted.

Muslim jurists who have dealt with the problem of sovereignty seem to have been influenced by Greek philosophy to a certain extent. They regarded the relation between the sovereign and the nation as a bilateral contract (*Iqd*) which imposed specific duties on the sovereign. There is another mode of transfer of sovereignty, *i.e.* by the instructions of the ruler when he designated his successor. A reigning sovereign could appoint two or three successors and fix their order of succession to the Caliphate. Harun appointed his three sons, Amin, Mamun and Mutamin to

17 Zaydan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 255.



succeed to the Caliphate one after another. With the growth of the religious parties in the Muslim countries, the conception of sovereignty underwent a radical change. The Muslim sovereign exercised not merely the temporal but also spiritual powers and it was his duty to enforce Muslim law. He was not to interfere with the Muslim law, and was expected to extirpate heresies. Muslim law was enforced by each sect accordingly to its interpretation of the law, and was worse confounded. The orthodox in one Muslim country, Turkey, was regarded as a heretic in another, Persia, and *vice versa*. We have the paradoxical result that Shah Ismail who made Shi'ism state religion in 1502, and founded the Safawi dynasty in Persia hunted out Sunnis in Persia while his great rival, the Turkish Sultan, Selim II with equal zeal subjected the Shias to ruthless persecution. While the followers of Hassan-bin-Sabbah carried on their activities with undiminished energy. Another interesting question is, to what extent these ideas were prevalent in pre-Islamic Persia? Unfortunately, we do not possess sufficient material to enable us to answer this question. For this purpose, the doctrines which Mazdak preached deserve close study. The frequent insurrections of extreme sects of Shias in this period have been described by some European scholars as a recrudescence of the doctrines of Mazdak. Special monographs have been published on the Carmathians, the Assassins, and the Fatamites of Egypt, Mutazilites and those who wish to study them further can do so in the works of Steiner, Kremer, Goldzehir, Brunnow and De Sacy. From one point of view, it may be said that each race expressed itself in these sects. Moreover the Abbasid dynasty revived the principle of nationality and made Persians fully conscious of their national genius. The establishing of the Abbasid dynasty meant the supremacy of Persia, and Persian culture, Persian dress, Persian officials, both military and civil, as well as Persian conceptions of state and sovereignty dominate the state apparatus. The Arab race had shown a wonderful power of analysis, but it lacked initiative forces in administration and culture and did not possess creative faculty of the Persians. It is significant that most of the leading writers of the period were of Persian descent. Dozy



has given a luminous analysis of the Abbasid Revolution in his *L'Islamisme*. He says, "The ascendancy of the Persians over the Arabs, that is to say of the conquered over the victors, had already for a long while been in course of preparation; it became complete when the Abbasids, who owed their elevation to the Persians, ascended the throne. These princes made it a rule to be on their guard against the Arabs, and to put their trust only in foreigners, Persians, especially those of Khurasan, with whom, therefore, they had to make friends. The most distinguished personages at court were consequently Persians. The famous Barmecides were descended from a Persian noble who had been superintendent of the Fire temple at Balkh. Afshin, the all-powerful favourite of the Caliph al-Mutasim was a scion of the princes Ustrushna in Transoxiana. The Arabs, it is true, murmured, and endeavoured to regain their ancient preponderance. The war which broke out between the two brothers Al-Amin and Al-Mumun, the sons of Harun-al-Rashid, was in its essence merely the renewal of the war waged between the Arab and the Persian nationalities for supremacy. But the Arabs again experienced a check, and cost them what it might, they had to recognise the supremacy of Persia; again they were compelled to watch as passive spectators a change of government dependent on the defeat of one of these races by the other and resulting from it. The democratic point of view of the Arabs was indeed replaced by the despotic ideas of the Persians. The religious enthusiasm of the Arabs had welded the Arab tribes into a nation and the more the circle of foreign converts enlarged, the more the Caliphate lost its distinctive character as the fullest expression of the Arab race. Foreign races which differed fundamentally in their culture, traditions, and customs, were united in the bosom of Islam. There had been a great drain of the Arab manhood, in the early Muslim wars, and nearly two centuries were needed before it could furnish proof of its renewed energy. This it did in the campaigns against the Carmathians which was essentially an East Arabian Movement. The Abbasids had been successful by relying upon the people and troops of Khurasan, who had been won over by the new dynasty by their remarkable general Abu-Mus-

lim Khurasani, and when the Abbasids gained the upper-hand the Arab element naturally receded into the background. The Bedouin Arabs were notable in adapting themselves to the new conditions. In the early wars of the Muslims a summons to arms brought together an army of sufficient strength, but even under Hajjaj the inhabitants of Kufa failed to do military service except under threat of death. For the Arabs there was no longer any prospect of booty, for both the Persian and Roman provinces had already been conquered and exploited. Hence the Arabs who lived in the towns continued to serve the Caliph, but in a subordinate position, while the Arabs of the country returned to the solitude of the desert and reverted to their wild ways. Sometimes they made inroads into the civilised countries and took part in the numerous insurrections and revolts of the Carmathians."

The great civil war, in which the Arab tribes lost hundreds and thousands of their best men, had drained Arab energy and was a most decisive death-blow to the unity and cohesion of the Arabs. It also produced fissures in the Islamic states, and produced wars between Shias and Sunnis from which Islam has not yet recovered. The differences between these two sects were at first purely political, and the division did not assume religious complexion for some time. Another result of the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty was that the idea of nationality was first awakened into life and produced fruitful results. Nationality proved stronger than the tie of religion, and made the first breach in the solidarity of the Muslim state. In the east the Persians gave effective expression to it in their enthusiastic support of the family of Abbas. In the west the freedom-loving Berbers made heroic attempts to shake off the foreign yoke and succeeded in establishing independent dynasties under the nominal suzerainty of the Abbasids. Moreover, from the time of Caliph Mamun onward the troops of foreign mercenaries, who were mostly of Turkish origin, began to surround the Caliph and ultimately gained complete influence over the Caliphate. The Caliphs relied henceforth upon foreign soldiers, and from their midst came the Praetorian

guards who made and unmade Caliphs at their sweet will. Ibn Khaldun has given a very dark picture of the decline of the Muslim states in his time. Out of his experience he developed the theory that the nomad element invariably works destructively and wrecks civilisation. Ibn Khaldun declares, "Consider all the countries which the Arab Bedouins have conquered since the earliest times. Civilisation and population have disappeared therefrom; even the very land seems to have changed in character. In Yaman, with the exception of some towns, the great meeting places of the people have become dreary and desolate. Previously the same thing happened in Iraq Arabi. All the beautiful buildings with which the Persian had adorned it have disappeared. In our own time Syria has been ruined. Africa and the west are still suffering from the devastations of the Bedouins. In the fifth century A. H. the nomad tribes of Hudhyl and Sulaim made their appearance in the country; and ever since for three centuries, they have done their work of horror and devastation; and lo! you see nothing but waste and ruin. Before their appearance the entire country of Nirangistan to the Mediterranean was richly populated; and proof of this you find in the remains of the old civilisation and in the numerous towns, hamlets, monuments and buildings". In the eastern parts of the Islamic Empire we have the same story of decay and devastation. Following a law of nature, frequently repeating itself in history, the northern people pressed south. The old wars of Iran and Turan were due to the descent of the Tartar races of northern Asia upon the Persian and Indian frontiers.

By the end of the tenth century the Caliphate had lost all power and vigour. What had been once a real unity under a Caliph was now a collection of scattered dynasties, not one of which obeyed the Caliph's mandate. Spain and Africa, including Egypt, had become independent of the Caliphs of Baghdad; northern Syria and Mesopotamia were in the hands of Arab chiefs, some of whom founded their dynasties; Persia was split up into numerous factions of the Buwahid princes who being Shias had no respect for the Baghdad Caliphs.

*The Seljuk Turks.* The Turks, on the other hand, have remained pre-eminently a race of conquerors, administrators and generals. The author of *Rahat'u's-Sudur* relates that the Imam Abu Hanifa the founder of the orthodox school once prayed to God that his doctrines might endure, and that the answer came to him from the unseen world, "Thy doctrine shall not wane so long as the sword continues in the hands of the Turks." Upon this the aforesaid author, who wrote in 1202-3, A. D. jubilantly exclaims that, "In Arabia, Persia, Rum (Turkey in Asia) and Russia, the sword is in their hands; that religion, learning and piety flourish under their protection; that irreligion, heresies, schism, philosophy and the doctrines of materialism and metempsychosis have been stamped out so that "all paths are closed save the path of Muhammad." The Turks took great pride as champions of orthodoxy and subjected the heretics to severe measures. The treatment of Shias by Selim II was as cruel as the treatment of Sunnis by his rival, Shah Ismail, and there is not much to choose between these two great protagonists of rival creeds.

## CHAPTER IV

### RISE OF NEW SECTS—NEW TRENDS IN CULTURE

*The Rise of Ismailies, Hasan-i-Sabbah.* In North Africa the Ismailite anti-Caliphs had established a stable government and consolidated their power, and disputed sovereignty with the Seljuk Turks. In Persia the Assassins were propagating their secret doctrines and exercising a remarkable influence on the heart and mind of the people. The two greatest propagandists of the new doctrines were Nasir-i-Khusraw and Hasan-i-Sabbah. This is not a political history of the period, and I have not sufficient space to discuss the momentous happenings of the eleventh century. Probably the greatest Wazir of the period was Nizamul-Mulk, the founder of the Nizamia College. Nizamul-Mulk was born in 1017-18 A. D. and belonged to a class of small landed gentry. He was one of the wisest prime ministers of the century and was a capable administrator, and a sagacious statesman. His fanatical devotion to the Hanafi doctrines made him harsh towards the heretics, especially the Shi'ites and Ismailies. He was, however, a liberal patron of men of letters and a sincere friend of scholars. The Nizamia College which he founded produced some of the greatest scholars and theologians of the age. Among its professors there was the great Al-Ghazali. Nizamul-Mulk wrote a treatise on the history and art of government, entitled *Siyasat Nama*. It is one of the most remarkable works on the subject and has been translated into French by M. Schefer. Nizamul-Mulk was later dismissed owing to the jealousy of the favourite wife of Malik Shah, Turkan Khatun. He did not long survive his disgrace and was assassinated by a young man, a follower of Assassins, who approached him in the guise of a suppliant and inflicted upon him a mortal wound. The power of Ismailies reached its height in this century and both Europe and Asia were made aware of their might by the devo-

tion, zeal and courage which its devotees showed. Their discipline was proverbial, and the terror they inspired among all classes, from the Caliph to the meanest subordinate, is described in the writings of the period. They had several grades of initiation but the grade of Fidai was specially designed for desperate errands. The obedience of Fidai to the orders of their chief is exemplified in the account given to us by Frapipino and Marino Sanuto.<sup>18</sup> "When during a period of truce, Henry, Count of Champagne (titular king of Jerusalem), was on a visit to the old man of Syria, one day, as they walked together, they saw some lads in white sitting on the top of a high tower. The *Shaykh* turning to the Count asked if he had any subjects as obedient as his own; and without waiting for a reply made a sign to two of the boys, who immediately leaped from the tower and were killed on the spot". In the reigns of Malik Shah and his son Sanjar, culture was ardently fostered, and this period witnessed a renaissance of Muslim intellect. It is impossible for me to deal at length with the works of numerous scholars who achieved world-renown in this period. It is sufficient to mention the names of some scholars. Nasir Khusro's *Safar-Nama* or *Travels* gives a vivid account of the period and his *Diwan* is equally famous. Some blasphemous verses are ascribed to Nasir Khusro, and Jami cites a few in his *Baharistan*. Omar Khayyam was another luminary of this period. His early life is surrounded with legends. We have the well-known story of the three friends which is mentioned for the first time in *Jamiut Tawarikh*, of Rashid-ud-Din Fazal-ullah author of a comprehensive history of the Mongols. It is said that the three great men of the period, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Omar Khayyam and Hassan-i-Sabbah were at school together at Nishapur and they became so intimate that they took a solemn vow in each other's blood that whichever of them should attain to high rank, should protect and help the others. The historian then proceeds, "Now it happened, by a train of circumstances fully set forth in the *History of the House of Seljuk* that Nizamul-Mulk attained to the position of Prime Minister. Umar Khayyam waited

<sup>18</sup> E. G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. II, pp. 208-209.



upon him and reminded him of the vows and covenants of their boyish days. Nizamul-Mulk recognising the old claims, said, "I give thee the government of Nishapur and its dependencies." But Umar, who was a great man, and withal a philosopher and a man of sense, replied, "I have no desire to administer a province or to exercise authority over people, rather assign to me a stipend or pension." So Nizamul-Mulk assigned him an allowance of ten thousand dinars from the treasury of Nishapur, to be paid over to him annually without deduction of tax."

The author then discusses the arrival of Hasan-i-Sabbah to ask for his share of Nizamul-Mulk's patronage. Hasan refuses the government of Ray or Isfahan, which his friend offers him. He is given a high post at Court, and having attained that position, he compasses the overthrow of his friend, whom he wishes to replace as Prime Minister. Hasan's plans miscarry, and he is disgraced. He flees to Khurasan, visits Isfahan, and then goes to the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mustansir, where he champions the cause of Nisar and returns to Persia to carry on the new propaganda.

Professor Browne shows that the legend cited above presents chronological difficulties so serious that so long as the chief authority which could be quoted in its poems was the admittedly superior *Wasaya* or Testamentary (Instructions of Nizamul-Mulk), it was unhesitatingly repudiated by all critical scholars since its fundamental assumption is that two eminent persons (Hasan-i-Sabbah and Umar Khayyam) who died at an unknown age between 1123-24, A. D. were in their youth fellow students of Nizamul-Mulk who was born in 1017 A. D. The chances of two persons attaining a hundred years of age are slender. It is probable that Anshirwan bin Khalid, minister of the Seljuk prince Mahmud bin Malikshah, who resigned in the years 1117-31, was the fellow student of the Grand Master of the Assassins and the Royal Astronomer. Curiously enough the references to Omar Khayyam in contemporary literature are few. The *Chahar Magala* shows that the poet was alive in 1114-15 A. D., that his grave was at Nishapur, and the idea prevalent



among admirers of Omar Khayyam that he was buried under a rose-bush is groundless. He was not buried under a rose-bush but under the blossoms of peach-trees and pear-trees.<sup>19</sup> Another work compiled in the thirteenth century describes Omar as a follower of Avicenna, but ill-tempered and inhospitable. Al-Ghazali seems to have disliked him, and he conversed with him on at least one occasion. Omar was liked by Malik Shah but his successor Sanjar did not favour him. Early records represent Omar as a philosopher, astronomer and mathematician but he is not mentioned as a mystic. In fact Sufi Nazamuddin Razi denounced him as the arch free-thinker of his time. Those who wish to study this subject further, should consult Professor Browne's History, who has dealt with it exhaustively. Another great scholar of the period who made a notable contribution to the literature of the period, is Nasir Khusrow. Nasir was one of the ablest exponents of the Ismaili doctrines, and was a warm supporter of the Fatimite Caliphs of Egypt.

*Nasir-i-Khusrow.* Nasir-i-Khusrow's *Divan* shows a devout spirit throughout; he regards the Fatimid Caliphs as the only lawful rulers, and the keepers of the Garden of God, and a Gate to the Imam is to be found in every country. There are allusions to the mystical number seven and to the Islamic doctrine of Asas. Khusrow shows a democratic spirit and he expressed a profound contempt for the Royal courts and courtiers, literary triflers and writers of erotic poetry. This great Ismaili poet, who was one of the chief leaders of Ismailis, shows a rugged independence in his dealings with princes and courtiers, and his writings reveal a combination of originality, learning, and fearless spirit, which are exceedingly rare in Persian poetry. Nasir-i-Khusrow is also credited with a few blasphemous verses which are widely known in Persia even at the present time, and are cited by Professor E. G. Browne in his work *Years Amongst the Persians*. Jami gives the first verse in his *Baharistan* in the short notice which he gives to Nasir-i-Khusrow:

"O God, although through fear I hardly dare  
To hint it, all this trouble springs from Thee.

19 Browne, Vol. II page 248.

Hadst Thou no sand or gravel in Thy shoes  
What made Thee suffer Satan willingly?

"T'were well if Thou hadst made the lips and teeth  
Of Tartar beauties not so fair to see.

With cries of 'on : Thou bidst the hound pursue'  
With cries of 'on : Thou bidst the quarry flee'."

The second is cynical rather than blasphemous :

Death drunk, not like a common sot, one day  
Nasir-i-Khusrow went to take the air.

Hard by a dung-heap he espied a grave,  
And straightway cried, 'O ye who stand and stare,  
Behold the world : Behold its luxuries :

Its dainties here—the fools who ate them there.

A third piece scoffing at the resurrection of the body is given by Schefer in his Introduction to the *Safar-nama*, together with the two couplets in which Nasir-ud-din Tusi is said to have replied to it. Professor Browne gives the sense of the third piece thus—

"Some luckless wretch wolves in the plain devour;

His bones are picked up by vulture and by crow

*This* casts his remnants on the hills above;

*That* voids its portion in the wells below.

Shall this man's body rise to life again?

Defile the beards of fools who fancy so"<sup>20</sup>.

Mention may be made here of another erratic writer, Al-Maarri, who has been hailed by Von Kremer as one of the neatest sceptics of the age. Maarri's poems have, however, been overrated by Kremer, and I am inclined to agree with Professor Margoliouth, who has translated Maarri's Letters that European scholars have read into his works far more than the poet meant. Al Maarri was, however, a most remarkable man, who lived a solitary life and was, because of his solitude and frustration, morose, cynical and peevish. Kremer was the first European scholar to show the creative



translated *Ibn-ul-Muqafa*. The Arabic version of the *Anwari Subeli* expresses in parts in a more bombastic and florid style the simple version of Nasirullah. Another renowned scholar of the period was Al-Ghazali. I shall discuss his doctrines, in a later part of this work. It is sufficient to state that from his time mysticism sustained and fortified the temple of learning in Islam. Ghazali has also given the title of *Hujjat-ul-Islam* or the proof of Islam. He was born at Tus in Khusasan in 450 A. H. and studied for a while in Gurgan, from where he went to Nishapur. His writing attracted the notice of the great Nizam-ul-Mulk, and he was appointed a Professor in the Nizamia College which he had founded twenty-five years before at Baghdad. Ghazali lectured there for four years, made a pilgrimage to Mecca, then visited Syria, where he composed his great work the *Ihya'u ulumid-Din*. This work was later on abbreviated in a popular version with the title of *Kimiya-yi-Sa'adat*. From there Ghazali returned to Nishapur and taught for a while in the Nizamia College in that city. He then went back to his native place, Tus, where he died on Monday 14th Jumada II A. H. 505. He wrote about seventy books which include a refutation of the Batinis or Ismailis's doctrines, "the Saviour from Error" (*al-Munquidh minad-Dalal*), and the celebrated "Destruction of the Philosophers" (*Tab'a futu' l-Falasifa*), which at a later date called forth the "Destruction of the Destruction" (*Tabafutut-Tabafut*) of Averroes (Ibn Rushid) of Cordova.

The Assassins were very active in this period and Abdul Malik Attash played an infamous part in a conspiracy in which the minister Sa'ad ul-Mulk was implicated. The author of *Rabatu's Sudur* as well as Ibn Athir give details of the destruction of the Assassin stronghold of Shah Dizh, or Dizhi-Kuh near Isphahan, when Ibn Attash was crucified, and a systematic extirpation of the Assassins and the destruction of their numerous mountain-fortresses was carried out in the spring of 1107 A. D. Another great writer of this golden age of Muslim Culture was Shaikh Sadi, who is known to every Muslim child in Asia. Sadi is as familiar to us as our intimate friends, and we follow his wanderings

with the deepest interest. As every Muslim child has read Sadi's *Gulistan* and *Bustan* it is unnecessary for me to deal with these works here. Shaikh Sadi had an adventurous life which is divided into three periods : the period of study, which lasted till 1226 A. D. Sadi is said to have been born in Shiraz in 1184 A. D. and to have died in 1291 A. D. at the age of one hundred and seven. His second period begins with his departure from Shiraz in 1226, and travels in many parts of Asia until 1256 A. D. It is impossible to discuss in detail Sadi's prolific writings. He seems to have travelled in the true style of a Darvesh in Balkh, Ghazna, the Punjab, Somnath, Gujerat, the Yemen, many parts of Arabia, Abyssinia, Syria, North Africa and Asia Minor. He mixed, in the course of his wanderings, with all classes of persons, from the beggars on the streets to the princes on the throne.

*Qabus-nama on Old Age.* Another characteristic product of the period is the *Qabus-nama* which throws a flood of light on the moral and social ideals of the age. It paints a vivid picture of the manners and customs of the period. The book is exceedingly popular, and is full of wisdom and homely wit. It was composed in 1082-83 A. D. by 'Unsuru'l-Ma'ali Kay-Kaus the grandson of Qabus bin Washmgir, prince of Tabaristan, himself a man of high literary attainments, and author of the *Qabus-nama*. The following extracts from the *Qabus-nama* paint for us a picture of the infirmities of old age, and give a vivid account of the decrepitude and helplessness which old age brings in its train :

"Know, then, that they will not let thee be when thy senses have declined from their use. When the doors of speech, sight, hearing, touch and taste are all shut on thee, neither wilt thou be able to enjoy life, nor can thy life give enjoyment to others. Thou wilt become a trouble to all, therefore death is better than such a life. But when thou art old, avoid the extravagances of youth, for the nearer one comes to death, the further should he be from extravagance. Man's life is like the sun, and thou mayest regard the sun which is on the western horizon as already set as I say :

"In Age's clutch Kay-Kaus helpless see :

Prepare to go, for years three score and three

Press hard. Thy day to Vesper time draws nigh,

And after vespers, Night comes suddenly."

"But be thou ever compassionate towards the old, for age is a sickness cheered by no visits, and a disease which no physician can heal save Death alone; seeing that the old man can find no relief from the troubles of age till he dies. For whatever sickness befalleth man, if he dieth not, he hath each day some hope of improvement; save in the case of the sickness of age, since herein he waxeth ever older and hath no hope of betterment. Thus I have read in some book that up to thirty-four years man waxeth daily in strength and robustness. After thirty-four years he remains the same, neither waxing nor waning, just as when the sun stands in the midst of heaven, it moveth slowly until it begins to sink. From forty to fifty years, every year he sees in himself some decrease which he did not notice the year before. From fifty to sixty years, every month he sees in himself some decrease which he did not notice in the previous month. From sixty to seventy years, every week he sees in himself some decrease which he did not notice in the previous week. From seventy to eighty years, every day he sees in himself some decrease which he did not see the day before. And if he outlives eighty, every hour he is sensible of some pain or ache which he did not perceive the previous hour. The pleasure of life is until forty years of age. When, thou hast ended forty rungs of the ladder, thou shalt without doubt descend, and must needs come to that place whence thou didst set out. So he must needs be dissatisfied who is hereby afflicted with some pain or ache which had not befallen him in the previous hour. Therefore, O my son, and the Delight of mine Eyes, I have complained to thee at length of old age, because I have against it a grievous indictment; nor is this strange, for old age is an enemy, and of enemies do we make complaint."

*The Poem entitled the Tears of Khorasan.* I will conclude this brief account of the Renaissance by reproducing a grace-



ful poem entitled *Tears of Khurasan* which was first translated into English verse by Kirkpatrick in Vol. I of the *Asiatick Miscellany*, and again by Professor E. H. Palmer in his *Song of the Reed*. "This poem," says Kirkpatrick, "is one of the most beautiful in the Persian language. The sentiments are throughout natural, and not infrequently sublime; the images are for the most part striking and just; the diction is at once nervous and elegant, animated and chaste, and the versification, although not everywhere equally so smooth and flowing seems, notwithstanding, to be happily adapted to the subject, the measure being, as I believe, the most slow and solemn that is used in Persian poetry." The poem shows the terrible havoc wrought in one of the most fertile parts of Persia by the savage Turkoman hordes of the Ghuzz tribe about the year 548. The tribe had paid a yearly tribute of twenty-four thousand sheep for the kitchen of King Sanjar, son of the great Seljuk king Malik Shah. Sanjar foolishly attacked the tribe, after a petty dispute, and rejected the apologies and indemnity of a hundred thousand dinars and a thousand Turkish slaves which the terror-stricken Ghuzz tribesmen offered him. His nobles advised him not to listen to the proposals of the barbarians. The battle proved disastrous for the luckless monarch, as the tribesmen fought desperately and destroyed his army, took him prisoner, and brought him captive to his own capital Merv. The capital was given over to pillage for three days, and the miserable inhabitants were subjected to horrible tortures. The cruel tribesmen were joined in their depredations by disbanded soldiers and bad characters of the town. The motley crowd pushed on to Nishapur where a terrible massacre took place, and in the great mosque numerous persons were butchered. The men of the Ghuzz tribe spread themselves over the whole of Khurasan, with the exception of Iraq, which made a most gallant resistance. Sanjar, succeeded, after two years of captivity, in bribing some of the Ghuzz chiefs, and he managed his escape from Balkh to Merv. The sufferings which the unfortunate prince had undergone, however, proved too much for him and he died in 552 A. H. The poem was written during Sanjar's captivity and is probably addressed to Muhammad



bin Suleman. It is a long poem as it comprises seventy-three couplets, and I quote a few of the finest passages in the translation of Kirkpatrick:

## (1)

Waft, gentle gale, oh waft to Samarkand,  
When next thou visitest the blissful land,  
The plant of Khorassania plunged in woe;  
Bear to Turanias' king our piteous scroll,  
Whose opening breathes forth all the anguished soul,  
And close denotes what all the tortured know.

## (2)

Whose red-tinged folds rich patriot blood enclose  
The mortal fire imposed by ruthless foes,  
And misshap'd letters prove our trembling fears:  
Whose every word reveals a pungent grief;  
Whose every line implores a prompt relief,  
While every page is moistened with our tears.

## (3)

Soon as land fame our wretched fate shall sound,  
The ear of Pity shall receive a wound,  
And feel the extreme of intellectual pain:  
Soon as our dismal tale shall meet the view,  
The melting orbs shall catch a purple line,  
And sanguine drops the mournful verse disdain.  
Here upstart slaves, to fame and worth unknown,  
Rear their proud crests, and in imperious tone,  
Command, whom distant nations still revere:  
Here Avarice scoffs at virtue in distress,  
And spurns whose bounty grateful thousands bless.  
Oh hard reverse; and fate too, too severe;  
View where sage elders, prostrate at door,  
Of some low wretch, in vain relief implore;  
In vain their anguish and their wrongs disclose;  
Behold the sons of rank debauchery bind  
You holy anchorite, by Heaven resigned,

A prey to dangerous and to sharpest woes ;  
 Is there were ruin reigns in dreadful state,  
 Whom Fortune smiles on, or whom joys await ?  
 'Tis yonder corpse descending to the tomb :  
 Is there a spotless female to be found,  
 Where deeds of diabolic lust abound ?  
 'Tis yonder infant issuing from the womb :  
 The mosque no more admits the pious race;  
 Constrained they yield to beasts the holy place,  
 A stable now, where dome nor porch is found :  
 Nor can the savage foe proclaim his reign,  
 For Khorassania's criers all are slain,  
 And all her pulpits levelled with the ground.

*The Fatimide Caliphs of Egypt.* We have so far dealt with the institutions of the Abbasid Caliphs who based their laws upon the commentaries of the four great Imams of the Sunni sect. The Shia laws and the institutions which they built up show variations in many points. The Fatimides of Egypt, who were Shias, generally followed the administrative methods of the Abbasids. They differed, however, on some points of the Muslim creed, and encouraged the Shi'ite system in every possible way. The Wazir of the Fatimide Caliph, Aziz, Yakub Ibn Killis composed a manual of law based on what he had heard from Al-Muizz and his son Aziz. It was divided into sections and was in bulk about half the size of the *Sahih* of Bukhari. It contained the law of the Ismaili sect, and the Fatimide made special arrangements for its circulation among non-Ismaili Muslims. The Wazir himself had audiences in which he read the book out to disciples. They were attended by both high and low, and by most of the jurists, judges and scholars. The Wazir's manual became the general reference book for legal questions, and on the authority of this manual, cases were decided, and it was taught in the ancient Mosque of Omar. The Caliphs further encouraged its study by offering prizes and rewards. Aziz gave substantial stipends to thirty-five jurists who attended the Wazir's course, in addition to yearly presents from the royal purse. He also gave orders that houses

should be built for the stipendiaries by the side of the Al-Azhar Mosque; robes of honour were bestowed on them at the Feast of the Fast-breaking, and they were given mules to ride. All this was done to encourage them to propagate the Shia law and its doctrines. Moreover, persons were appointed to sit in the royal residence and read out the works of the Alid Family to the people. It was hoped that by the propagation of the Shi'ite doctrine, the Fatimide dynasty would be strengthened, owing to the intimate connection between religion and politics in Asiatic countries in general, and Muslim countries in particular. Persons who studied other legal works were prosecuted and they were even tortured: thus a man who was found to have in his possession the *Muwatta* of Malik was beaten and dragged round the city. Yakub, the Wazir, who has been mentioned was originally a Jew, who embraced Islam, and rendered invaluable service to the Fatimide dynasty by his skilful propaganda. We are not surprised to read that when this man was ill he was visited by Aziz who said to him, "I could wish you were to be bought, in which case I would have given all my property to possess you."

The successive Fatimide Caliphs followed the same method, and did their best to spread the Shia doctrines in North Africa. Aziz and Hakim both established libraries with this object. Here men could read, meditate and be persuaded. When Zahir became Caliph in 411 A. H. he banished from Egypt the Malikite jurists, as well as followers of other orthodox schools, and severe orders were passed compelling the people to learn the "*Pillars of Islam*" and "*The Wazir's Abridgments*," and prizes were offered to those who committed them to memory. Under the Fatimide law of inheritance the whole inheritance goes to the relatives, and if there be a single daughter she takes the whole; this principle is meant, of course, to confirm the Alid's claim to the Caliphate, as they claim descent from Fatimah, who, when she died, was the Prophet's only child.<sup>22</sup> Those who wish to study in detail the Shia Law should consult M. Amedee Querry's *Droit Musulman: Recueil des*

<sup>22</sup> Zayadan, *Umayyads and Abbasids*, pp. 278-279.

*Lois concernant les Muslmans Schyites.* The author was a Frenchman who after twenty-five years' sojourn in Turkey and Persia where he filled important official positions, such as Counsellor of the French Legation at Teheran, published the book in two thick volumes in Paris, in 1871-72. The book is based upon the *Sbarayin'l-Islam fi masa'ili'l-Halal wa'l-haram* of the celebrated Shia doctor Najmud-Din Abul-Qasim Jafar Ibn al-Hasan-al Hilli, commonly called *Al-Muhagiq al-Awwal* (the first Verifier "or Investigator") who died in 676 A. H. (1277-78 A. D.).

## CHAPTER V

# ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS OF THE ISLAMIC STATE AND IMPERIAL EXPANSION

### Administration of Finances under the Muslims

*Sources of Revenue.* The sources of revenue of the Muslim community according to Mawardi were : property-tax, Sadaqan, Zakat, revenue derived from the payment of tribute by the subject races, the war-booty, capitation tax, tithe, and land-tax. The property tax was obligatory upon every Muslim, and this was the only legal tax which he was called upon to pay. All properties either public, such as arable lands, or private, which might be easily concealed, like gold and silver, were liable to this tax. Force was to be used against anybody who refused to pay this tax, and refusal was treated as rebellion against the Government. The tax was levied upon the following objects : (1) beasts of burden, camels, cattle and sheep, (2) the produce of date plantations and orchards. There was a difference of opinion on this point, but Abu Hanifa's opinion was generally followed, *viz.* that all fruits were taxable. (3) *Useful plant (Zuru)*. According to Abu Hanifa's all useful plants were liable to taxation; Imam Shafi, however, held that only those plants were taxable which were cultivated for food. (4) *silver and gold*. The tax upon silver and gold was one-quarter of the tithe, that is two and a half per cent. However, everything under two hundred dirhams was exempted from taxation. Upon two hundred dirhams and upwards five dirhams were levied. (5) *Mines*. Jurists differed as regards the taxation of mines. Abu Hanifa declared everything taxable which could be melted, such as copper, brass, silver, gold, etc. while others which could not be melted and were brittle or fluid were to be free from taxation.

*Poor-tax.* The provisions regarding the distribution of poor-tax were eminently sound, and they were an immense

improvement on the primitive methods in force in feudal Europe. The poor-tax was to be used for the following purposes—

1. To maintain the poor and the helpless. The poor included the impotent poor as well as the sturdy beggar.

2. A certain proportion of the 'Sadaqa' funds were to be employed for the payment of tax-officers.

3. Another proportion was to be utilised for the purpose of propagating Islam. Some of those who had been converted to Islam were to be paid out of this fund. Those who were employed for the defence of the country and for the propagation of Islam among the non-Muslims were also entitled to relief from this fund. The Sadaqa fund could be paid to Muslims alone.

4. A certain amount could be paid out of the fund to slaves who wished to purchase their freedom.

5. The Sadaqa fund could also be utilised for the liquidation of debt if it had been incurred in the interest of Islam and of the state. Such debts were to be paid fully.

6. The tax was also used for the payment of the Muslims who had voluntarily joined the forces from religious or patriotic motives.

7. Lastly, helpless strangers were also entitled to help out of the fund. The distribution of the Sadaqa tax was to be restricted to the locality in which it was levied, and it was to be restricted to be paid to the members of two Mekka families of Muttalib and Hashim as they belonged to the Prophet's family. A rich man or a near relation of an officer who was charged with the duty of collecting the Sadaqa fund was ineligible for payment out of the fund.

*The Public Revenue of the State.* The payments made by the subject races in consonance with treaties, and capitulations constituted an important source of state revenue. These payments were called "*al Fai*". This was a com-

prehensive term and included moneys paid for concluding armistice with Muslim troops, the capitation tax, the tithe, imposed upon merchandise, wares of unbelievers which were imported into Muslim territories for commercial purposes, and finally the land-tax. The *Quran* in the Sura LIX, 7, lays down that the whole revenue of state should be divided into five equal parts of which one portion was to be placed at the free disposal of the Prophet and then of his successors. The Arab jurists, who were fond of minute and subtle distinctions and classifications, divide the fifth part into four shares, which were allotted for the following purposes—

(1) for the Prophet himself, (2) for the assistance of the relatives of the Prophet and their dependents, (3) support of orphans, (4) for poor and helpless travellers. The remaining four-fifths were to be used for the maintenance of the state army. A clear distinction was drawn between those who were entitled to relief from Sadaqa fund, and those who could apply for assistance from the state treasury. Only those could be helped out of the first category who did not belong to the military classes; while the soldiers and defenders of Muslim territories could be paid only out of the general state revenue. The families of the Muttalib and the Hashim tribes were paid out of the general state revenue, and they were specially forbidden payment out of the Sadaqa fund. The entire state revenue went to the state treasury and the sovereign alone could sanction expenditure. In the case of the Sadaqa tax, on the other hand, the collectors of the tax were authorised to make arrangements for its distribution. I have generally followed Von Kremer who has based his studies of this period mainly upon Mawardi. Unfortunately Mawardi did not deal comprehensively with the system of taxation and the source of the state revenue, as they were not fully developed in the early period of Islam. The phenomenal economic prosperity of the empire wholly changed the original theories of finance, and Mawardi's analysis must therefore be recast in the light of these events. Aghinides has dealt with this subject exhaustively in his *Muhammadan Theories of Finance*. Von Kremer's account has been modified by the comprehensive analysis of this author.



## The Inelasticity of the Tax Structure of the Caliphate

The main thing which strikes us in our study of the administrative structure of the Abbasid Caliphate is that it deals with an undeveloped empire, in which the original ideas on administration have not been radically modified by the forces of production, which the phenomenal growth of industry and commerce rendered necessary. The structure of taxation which had been devised for primitive times was wholly unsuited to the infinitely complicated economic structure which developed in the second and third centuries of the Islamic era. There were infinite variations and modifications of the rules which had been formulated in the early Muslim period. Baghdad with its population of one million persons, Cairo, Cordova, Damascus and other centres which witnessed concentrated commercial activity could not be effectively administered on principles which had been broached tentatively in the early period of Islam. A careful study of the Muslim states of the period will convince any one that administrators were obliged to resort to new devices in their desperate effort to maintain financial stability.

This is especially the case in the period which witnessed the decline and the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate. Mecca, Damascus and Baghdad in the East, and Cordova, Seville and, later on, Granada in the West, stood for Arab culture and civilisation. By the Arab civilisation we do not mean the civilisation of pure Arabs, but of the race which was a result of the mixture of Arabs and subject races. The Arabic language was the language of the court, diplomacy and administration, and extended from Spain to the whole of North Africa, the Middle East, parts of Central Asia, India, Java and Malaya. Literature had been developed in the Arabic language by the co-operation of races of Asia and Europe, and was rich and extensive as Greek and Roman literature and learned institutions, academies, hospitals, libraries, observatories and universities were founded in several countries. Le Strange has given a vivid account of the mental and economic activity of lands of the Eastern Caliphate in his work entitled *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*. The author gives a graphic account of important towns

and cities in each province of the empire. The Arab geographers wrote monumental works on the geography of the Empire. The geographer Masudi is one of the greatest figures of his age. Mr. Le Strange has paid a graceful compliment to this geographer in his work.

Unfortunately the political decline of the Caliphate was reflected in the decay that set in, in the beginning of the ninth century A. D. economic disintegration followed the disruption of the empire. Political and religious quarrels assumed most dangerous proportions in the ninth century, the Muslim world was disrupted, and a number of independent and semi-independent kingdoms arose which carried on an internecine warfare against each other. The process of disintegration began with the reign of the Caliph Mutawakkil. The account of the progress of Islam from the time of the early Caliphs, and the disintegration of the Abbasid Caliphate about the middle of the ninth century, which is based upon the monumental work of Stanley Lane-poole entitled the *Mohammadan Dynasties* is essential for the study of the period. At the accession of the first Caliph, Abu-Bakr, the rule of Islam comprised no territory outside Arabia, but during his brief reign of two years the tide of Muhammadan conquest had already begun to swell. In 633 the Battle of the Chains followed by other victories, admitted the Muslims to Chaldaea (Irak-Arabi) and gave them the city of Hira. In 634 the battle of Yarmuk opened Syria to their arms; Damascus fell in 635, Emesa, Antioch and Jerusalem in 636; and the conquest of Caesarea completed the subjugation of Syria in 638. Meanwhile the victory of Kadisiya in 635 was followed by the conquest of Madain (Seleucia—Ctesiphon); the old capital of Chaldaea was acquired in 637; Mesopotamia was subdued, and the cities of Basra and Kufa founded; and Khuzistan and Tustar were annexed in 638-40. The decisive battle of Nahawand in 642 put an end to the Sasanid dynasty, and gave the whole of Persia to Muslims. By 661 the Muslims were at Herat and soon carried their arms throughout Afghanistan and as far as the Indus, where they established a Government in Sind. In 674 they occupied Bokhara, and two years later

Samarkand, but these early raids in Transoxiana were not converted into settled conquests until 711. In the East, the Caliphate reached its utmost limits in little more than forty years after the Muslims had first led a campaign outside Arabia. The phenomenal progress of Muslims has never been equalled in any period of world history.

In the West, the progress of Muslim arms was slower. In 641 Egypt was conquered, and by 647 the Barbary coast was overrun up to the gates of Roman Carthage; but the wild Berber population was more difficult to subdue than the pleasure-loving subjects of the Sasanids of Persia or the sophisticated and logic-chopping Greeks of Syria and Egypt. Kayrawan was founded as the African capital in 670; Carthage fell in 693, and the Arabs pushed their arms as far as the Atlantic with ruthless energy. From Tanjier they crossed into Spain in 710, and the conquest of the Gothic kingdom was completed on the fall of Toledo in 712. Southern France was overrun in 726, and in spite of the victory of Charles over the Arabs near Tours in 732, Muslims continued to hold Narbonne and to ravage Burgundy and the Dauphine for a long time. Thus in the West the Caliphate attained its widest extent in less than a century after the conquest of Iraqi Arabia.

To the North, the Greeks retained Anatolia which never belonged to the Caliphate, but the Muslims invaded Armenia, and reached Erzerum about 700; Cyprus had been annexed as early as 649, and Constantinople was several times besieged from 670 onwards.

*The Widest Extent of the Abbasid Caliphate.* Thus the empire of the Caliphs at its widest extended from the Atlantic to the Indus, and from the Caspian to the cataracts of the Nile. So vast a dominion could not be held together for a long time. The first signs of disintegration began in Spain, where Abd-al-Rahman, a member of the persecuted Umayyad family, was acknowledged as an independent sovereign in 755, and the sovereignty of the Abbasids was renounced. Thirty years later, Idris, a great-grandson of the Caliph Ali, and therefore equally at variance with the

Abbasids and Umayyads, founded an Alid dynasty in Morocco, with Thudgha for its capital in 788. The rest of the north African coast was practically lost to the Caliphate when the Aghlabid governor established his authority at Kayrawan in 800. In the following century, Egypt, together with Syria, attained independence under the rule of Ibn-Tulun, by the year 877. It is true that after the collapse of the Tulunids, governors were again appointed over Syria and Egypt by the Abbasid Caliphs for thirty years, but in 934 Ikshid founded his dynasty, and thenceforward no country west of the Euphrates ever recognised the temporal authority of the Caliphs of Baghdad, though their spiritual title was generally acknowledged on the coins and in the public prayer (*Khutba*) except in Spain and Morocco.

In the East also, the Abbasid dynasty broke up into fragments. The famous general of Mamun, Tahir Dhu-i-Yaminayn on being appointed viceroy of the East in 819 became virtually independent; and his house, and the succeeding dynasties of the Saffarids, Samanids, and Ghaznavids, whilst admitting the spiritual lordship of the Caliphs, reserved to themselves all the power and wealth of the eastern provinces of Persia and Transoxiana. From the middle of the ninth century the Abbasid Caliphs fell more and more under the influence of the mercenary Turkish bodyguards and servile *maires du palais*; and the sovereignty of the Buwayhids, who occupied even the 'City of Peace,' Baghdad itself in 945, was little more than a change in their alien tyrants. From this date the Caliphs merely held a court, but governed no empire, until their extinction by the Mongols in 1258. Occasionally, however, as in the Caliphate of Nasir, they extended their authority outside the palace walls and even ruled the whole province of Arabian Iraq (Chaldaea).<sup>23</sup>

This is not a political history of the period, and deals mainly though not exclusively, with Muslim culture and I do not propose to deal with the dynasties that arose in Asia and Europe. I have also left out the Muslim kingdoms of India and other parts of Asia.

<sup>23</sup> Stanley Lane-poole, *Mohammadan Dynasties*, pp. 4-8.

Centuries before the extinction of the Caliphate, the Abbasid Empire was suffering from many social diseases. In the days of Abbasid Caliphate customs barriers did not exist, commerce was comparatively free, and no substantial changes had been made in the system of taxation which had been in force. The simplicity of the old tax structure had prompted and fostered trade among different parts of the empire. The economic pattern of the empire was destroyed by the independent states which emerged from the welter of anarchy and confusion, and the new rulers began a systematic exploitation of economic resources without any consideration for their subjects or for the neighbouring states. A number of vexatious transit tolls, consumption duties (*Mokus*) and other extortionate dues were imposed by the imperious dictators who had usurped the Caliph's authority, and wanted money for their powerful armies. The rural population was fleeced by landlords, and the land-tax was raised to an amount which the miserable tenant found it impossible to pay. The recurrent pestilence and famines in different parts of the empire ruined not only cities but whole provinces. We find frequent references to plague, famine, and epidemics, in the history of the period. There were forty great epidemics from 18 A. H. to 406 A. H. in the course of four centuries, of which half of them began in or visited Iraq. Syria suffered from them twelve times. Famine joined hand with epidemic, and we find references to plague in Syria in 79 A. H., and 86 A. H. plague in Basra, in 87 A. H., again in 108 A. H. plague in Wasit, in 114 A. H. plague in Syria, in 115 A. H., plague in Iraq 116 A. H. plague (*Ta'un*) to and epidemic (*Wcha*) in Africa, which according to some historians, lasted seven years; there was plague in Syria, in 127 A. H. and in Basra in 130, 131, 135 A. H. It is impossible for me to describe the epidemics which visited the provinces of the Caliphate in the third and fourth centuries A. H. We find references in the writings of the geographers of the period to numerous towns which had decayed owing to famine or pestilence.

*The Nisibin Incident.* Further information on the subject will be found in Le Strange's book, *The Land of the Eastern Caliphate*. Monsieur Le Strange's account, which is based

on the work of Arab geographers, gives a graphic account of the decay of towns and the countryside in many eastern provinces of the Caliphate. Iraq suffered severely. It was one of the most fertile provinces of the empire. Its prosperity had been fostered by an excellent system of canals. With the destruction of its irrigation, Iraq became and has remained, a desert. Even the smallest provincial dynasty tried to increase its revenue by imposing fresh taxes and consumption duties. The confusion and disorder of the time may be illustrated by one curious incident. *The Hamadanides*, who ruled north Syria and a portion of Mesopotamia, also included the town of Nisibin in their dominion. Nisibin possessed numerous gardens, plantations and cultivable land and under the Arab rulers the town had achieved great prosperity. It paid one hundred thousand dinars (about a million francs) to the central government. In the year 360 A. H. an extraordinary event occurred. The ruler imposed so many iniquitous taxes and imposts, that the Arab tribe of Bani Habib which consisted of a large body of men could bear these exactions no longer and decided to migrate and take shelter in the Byzantine Empire in spite of the fact that they were related to the ruling Hamadanide family. All the families of the tribe, with their cattle and their personal property, left their homelands and settled in the Byzantine territory. The entire tribe, without a single exception, embraced the Christian faith, and by kind treatment its members became loyal citizens of the Byzantine emperor. They were granted lands and many other concessions. They wrote to their brethren and informed them of their kind treatment and good luck, with the result that they were joined by others who accepted the Christian faith. They were not, however, content with winning them over to Christianity and the Byzantine emperor. To avenge the oppression which they had suffered they undertook predatory expeditions in Muslim lands, and captured important fortifications, such as Hisn Mansur, Ziyad, and besieged Karkisiya and Dara. Every year at harvest time, these incursions were repeated. They went even as far as Nasibin and beyond to Ras-al-Ayn and further still. (*cf.* Kremer quoting Ibn Hawkal).



### **Ibn Hawkal on the Maladministration of the Empire**

The inefficiency and corruption of the administration is borne out by the account which Ibn Jubayr, the Spanish traveller, gives of the pilgrims who arrived in Alexandria. He says that they were cruelly oppressed by Egyptian customs officers, who would board the ships, even before they disembarked, take down the name of every single pilgrim, and most mercilessly exact the poor-tax, Zakat, from them. In another passage he tells us that the great Saladin had removed the pilgrim-tax, which had formerly been collected in the most brutal manner at Aidab, a seaport on the Red Sea where the pilgrims left for Jedda. The tax amounted to seven and half Egyptian dinars per head or about 75 francs—an impossible sum for the poor pilgrims. Those who were unable to pay the tax suffered cruel punishments. In other places pilgrims were subjected to shameful treatment and were mercilessly exploited by the customs officials.

### **Caliph-Mamun—the Disintegration of the Empire**

The decline of the Abbasid Caliphate began after the death of Mamun. Harun-al-Rashid had divided the Empire between his sons Amin and Mamun, though he had reserved for the former the suzerainty and the title of Caliph. Mamun lacked the ruthless efficiency of his ancestor, Caliph Mansur, and knew neither how to keep the victorious generals in their proper place, nor how to destroy them, as Mansur the greatest of the Abbasids had done. It is hard to believe that Mamun was hindered by scruples of conscience, as Mamun's conduct towards Musa, the descendant of Ali, shows that he could be ruthless if it served his purpose. In order to win over the still powerful Shi'ite party, Mamun had made many concessions to it; and he took steps, which can hardly be regarded sincere, to secure the accession to Musa. But when he was opposed by leading members of his own house and its immediate dependents, he secretly made away with that unfortunate prince. Mamun is famous for his patronage of art and science, and his liberal policy



towards scholars. The translation into Arabic of Greek scientific works, shed lustre on his regime. Mamun was a rationalist, and like our Emperor Akbar, he encouraged religious discussions and delighted in theological controversies. He, however, went to the other extreme and by making the doctrines of the Mutazila school compulsory on his subjects, he made the orthodox party of Ulema martyr among the masses. Moreover, from the time of Mamun, the Caliphs leaned on the support of foreign mercenaries who controlled the Caliphs and deposed them if they opposed their will. Mothers of some of the Caliphs were slaves, and they represented many races of Asia such as Persians, Turks, Kurds, Berbers, Abyssinians, Zanj, etc. Caliph Mansur's mother was a Berber slave; Mahdi's mother was Zanj; and Mohtadi's was Greek. The mixture of races was not confined to Abbasids. Other rulers did the same. The mother of the Fatimid Caliph Mustansir was a Sudanese slave, while that of Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyyah was, we are informed, "son of a black woman of Scinde." After the second century A. H. except in the desert, or in isolated towns where communication with foreigners was difficult, the Arabs intermarried with other races to such an extent that there were very few persons of pure Arab descent. The town Arab of the third century was a hybrid, whose culture, traditions and habits had been transformed by intermarriage. He had lost the energy, initiative and virility of the town Arab of the second century A. H., and had become a garrulous, coffee-house habitue. The Abbasids lost the purity of their blood, and this reacted on their disposition and policy. Very few of Mamun's successors showed any initiative or energy and most of them were dominated by their praetorian guards. The history of the later Abbasids is a record of revolts, insurrections and decay.

*The Rise of Turkish Guards.* When Mutasim became Caliph, and acquired his Turkish guards by purchase or persuasion, the army came to consist mainly of Mamelukes. The succeeding Caliphs were inclined to favour them and assigned them posts in their palaces, or gave them places on their private staff and escort. Some were promoted so high in the public service that they became commanders of

forces, and were virtually despots. The administration wholly changed its character and complexion. The Persians and the Clients, most of whom were of the Shi'ite faction gave way to the Turks, who were mostly zealous Sunnites. The Turks had adopted the Sunni creed with fervour from the time when Caliph Mutawakkil initiated persecution of the Shia creed, and compelled his subjects to conform to the orthodox doctrine.

This control of the palace began in the reign of Mutawakkil, who became Caliph in 23 A. H. As this most foolish and short-sighted Caliph had launched persecution of Shias, and it was essential for him to have substantial support, he thought it necessary to favour the Turks, who were powerful at the time. This increased their political influence, and their ambition was boundless. Mutawakkil's son Muntasir urged them (or was urged by them) to murder his father, which they did, this being the first occasion when the Turks made an attack on the life of a Caliph. They made Muntasir his successor whose reign, however, lasted only a few months, his guilty conscience accelerating his end.

He was succeeded by Mustain in 240, who was succeeded by Mutazz in 251. During his regime the influence of the Turks increased enormously. The following story illustrates their despotic power over the Caliph.

*The Degradation of the Caliphate.* When Mutazz was selected as Caliph, his courtiers held a sitting and summoning the astrologers, asked them to see how long the Caliph would live and how long he would retain his Caliphate. A wit, who was present, said, "I know better than the astrologer how long he will live and reign." Being asked to specify the time, he replied "so long as the Turks please," and every one present laughed. I do not wish to weary the reader by detailing the black record of the Turkish guards in their dealings with degenerate and decadent Caliphs, who followed Mutawakkil. It is a record of freshly invented tortures and gruesome practices. A parallel is supplied by the later Mughal emperors of India. Mutazz was slain by the savage Turkish guards in a horrible way, being dragged by

the feet to the door of his private apartment, and then stuck with pins. His shirt was then torn off, and he was placed in the sun, where, while he lifted his feet alternately in torture, the Turks smote him with their hands. Mustakfi was blinded and imprisoned till he died. Kabir was reduced to such indigence that when they cast him into prison he was wrapped in cotton *Jubbab* with wooden clogs on his feet. Whereas at first the Turkish captains swore allegiance to the Caliph, later on, the Caliph swore allegiance to them.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Fakhri 220 ; Ibn Athir, Vol. VII to IX ; and Juriji Zaydan, *Umayyads and Abbasids*, pp. 221-222, for a further gruesome account of this discreditable phase of the Caliphate.

## CHAPTER VI

### FEMININE INFLUENCE IN STATE AND SOCIETY

The deterioration in the character of the Caliphs naturally led to the preponderance of women and eunuchs, in the administration. It is said that the Byzantine emperors were the first to employ eunuchs, and the Arabs seem to have followed their example. Eunuchs, however, were powerful in ancient China and in many important periods of early Chinese history they wielded considerable influence. Muslim jurists and statesmen were strongly opposed to the participation of women in state affairs, and no vigorous and virile ruler submitted to petticoat government. All the able Caliphs adhered to this rule. Caliph Mansur advised his son Mahdi to "beware of giving women any control." Some Muslim jurists regarded obedience to women as a sign of the approach of doomsday.

*Influence of Women on Caliphs.* Later on, the character of the Caliphs deteriorated and the decadent Caliphs were worthless, lazy and pleasure-loving, spent most of their time in their harem, and came naturally under the influence of their female relations and slaves. The denizens of the palace sometimes numbered ten thousand. The influence of queen-mothers also increased, and some queen-mothers exercised vast influence in the administration. The first queen-mother who played the part of an autocrat was Khairuzuran, mother of Hadi and Rashid, a Harashite by birth. She was greatly feared by her children, and did not hesitate to kill any of them who thwarted or opposed her. She ruled absolutely in the days of her husband, Mahdi, who implicitly obeyed her. When her son Hadi became Caliph she wished to govern in his stead, and to treat him as she had treated his father. Before four months had passed visitors were crowding to her, and cavalcades arriving at her gate morning and evening. This annoyed her son, the Caliph. One day she preferred a request which he found

himself unable to gratify. She said, "You must assent, for I have promised this to Abdullah Ibn Malik." Hadi cried out angrily, "A plague upon the son: I knew he would want it. I sha'll certainly not grant it for you." "Then in that case I shall never ask you for anything again." "I do not mind that," Hadi replied. When she rose up in anger to depart, he cried out, "Stop; may I be disowned by the family of the Prophet if I do not deprive of his head and of his property any general councillor of mine of whom I hear that he has stood at your gate. What is the meaning of the cavalcades that come to you morning and evening? Have you not anything to spin: or a *Quran* to read, or a chamber for privacy? I warn you again and again not to open your door to Muslim, Jew or Christian." The queen-mother went away in a passion, and never opened her mouth in his presence again. Presently he said to his courtiers, "Which is better, I or you, my mother or your mothers?" They naturally replied that he and his mother were superior. He proceeded to ask, "Which of you would like to bear his mother talked about—so and so's mother has been doing this and that?" They replied that none of them would like it. "Why, then," he went on to ask, "do you come to my mother, and talk about her doings?" When the courtiers heard this, they ceased their visits to the queen-mother. She resented this: and hearing that he proposed annulling the succession of his brother Rashid and appointing his son Jafar as his successor, she ordered some of her slave-girls to kill him by covering his face with a blanket and sitting on it. This was done, and the cruel mother had her way.

When Rashid became Caliph she again became autocratic, and amassed vast wealth, her revenues reached 160,000,000 dirhams in the year, or nearly half the land-tax of the whole empire. After her death Rashid spent the whole amount on extravagant projects, and on various objects of his pleasure. The wealth of other queen-mothers was on the same scale. The Turkish mother of Muktadir, called Al-Sayyidah 'the Princess', had an extraordinary influence on the statesmen of the time during her son's reign. She controlled the affairs of the state by arrangement with the janitors

and slaves. The Viziers dreaded her and trembled at her name.

The mother of Mustain who was a slave by descent was cast in the same mould. Mustain gave complete control of the government to her with two Turkish commanders, Atamish and Shahik the Slave. The money brought from all parts of the empire to the treasury found its way for the most part into the hands of these three.

The influence of women reached its climax in the time of the incompetent Muktedir, when slaves and janitors were all-powerful. Besides Al-Sayyidah Mukhtar's mother, there were other celebrated women in this period. The Caliph's maternal aunt, Umma Musa al-Hashi-Miyyah, the Stewardess, with Al-Sayyidah, used to take bribes, and allied themselves with Musa, the slave, Nasr, the janitor and the clerks, etc. who were able to make affairs march as they pleased. Umma Musa was an astute woman, and went so far as to promise to procure the Caliphate for an Abbasid who was allied to her by marriage. She set about this work by distributing bribes to captains and others, one of whom betrayed her to Muktedir who had her arrested and made her disgorge her ill-gotten gains. Considerable influence was wielded by other women of the palace, and this naturally enhanced the power of the Clients, as these masterful women were of non-Arab extraction.

*The Institution of the Harem.* The Harem was started under the Umayyad Caliph Walid II. He was the first to employ eunuchs and in this he followed the example of the Byzantine emperors who employed eunuchs for the inner apartments of their palace. A learned Arab of the third century, A. H. Jahiz, strongly protested against the innovation and expressed his indignation.

*The Influence of Eunuchs.* The Byzantine emperors in this as in other matters became the models of the Caliphs. This devitalising and degrading system proved most unfortunate as it demoralised the Caliphs and gave infinite opportunities for mischief to a vicious class. The deterioration in



character of the Caliphate and the growth of the harem proceeded *pari passu* and ensured the decadence of the empire. The eunuchs played important parts as confidential servants and custodians of the female and their capacity for mischief was unlimited.

The eunuchs were purchased from the Greeks, who seem to have carried on the loathsome practice of their wretched victims. After the conquest of Iraq and Persia the Arabs imitated in many ways the customs and ceremonies of the pre-Muslim Persian sovereigns. An elaborate court etiquette was evolved, and it was modelled partly upon the customs of the Byzantine Court and partly on the ceremonies of Persia. Eunuchs played an infamous part in the labyrinthine intrigues and dangerous conspiracies in Islamic Spain. They were imported from France into Spain, where large establishments for the supply of these poor creatures had been set up; that of Verdun was famous, and there were others in South France.<sup>25</sup> Wine gradually made its appearance in the evening parties of the Caliphs, in spite of the stern prohibition of the *Quran*. At first the Umayyad Caliphs drank only the boiled juice of grapes, an innocent drink called *Bosatan*, which is still consumed at Beirut and Damascus. But pleasure-loving people wanted a more potent beverage and the notorious Caliph Yazid got drunk daily and is said to have scarcely ever been sober. Caliph Abdul Malik indulged in it once a month and his son Walid I drank every second day, while Hisham had his drinking parties every Friday. Unfortunately, the excitable Arabs soon took to drink, and many Caliphs were immersed in pleasure. Walid II seems to have excelled his predecessors in his craze for wine and women. The influence of women in the palmy days of Islam has been underestimated. Sir Charles Lyall was of the opinion that women enjoyed greater freedom in pagan Arabia and has cited many facts to prove his theory. It cannot be doubted that women exercised considerable influence and enjoyed great freedom, even under the Umayyad Caliphs. Their influence did not diminish under the Abbasids. Abdul Malik was completely under the influence of his beautiful



and haughty wife Attika, who was a granddaughter of Muawia. Once she was very angry with the Caliph and locked the door against him and refused him permission to enter her room. Among Arabian women who have excelled in poetry, the place of honour is due to Khansa; her real name was Tumadir and she flourished in the last years before Islam. By far the most famous of her elegies are those in which she bewailed the death of her valiant brothers Muawiya and Sakhr, both of whom were struck down by sword or spear. It is impossible to translate poignant and vivid emotion, the energy of passion and noble simplicity of style which distinguish the poetry of Khansa but here are a few verses—

Death's messenger cried aloud the loss of generous one,  
So loud cried he, by my life, that far he was heard and wide.  
Then rose I, and scarce my soul could follow to meet the  
news

For anguish and sore dismay and horror that Sakhr had died.  
In my misery and despair I seemed as a drunken man,  
Upstanding awhile—then soon this tottering limbs subside  
Yudhakkiruni tullu'lshamsi Sakhran  
Wa-ahkuruhu likulli ghurubi shamsi.  
Sunrise awakes in me the said remembrance  
of Sakhr, and I recall him at every sunset.<sup>26</sup>

*The Place of Women in Arab Society.* I do not agree with Sir Charles Lyall that the women in pagan Arabia had a higher status than in Muslim Arabia. Women occupied a very important place in society, and wielded great influence. Some women were very learned, such as Zainab, the daughter of Shari in Nishapur; the daughter of Shaikh Taqiuddin Wasiti, who received the title of Sett-ul-Fuquha, i.e. a woman who was a great jurist. She lectured on jurisprudence (*Kitan-ul-Khiraj* of Abu Yusuf) at Damascus. She used the original manuscript which is to be found in the collection of M. Schefer in Paris.

Only the Arabs produced such learned ladies. Of this type the Persians and the Turks have none to show. The utmost they can say is, that their women experimented in politics. Moreover the Arab women even exercised judicial functions.

It is surprising that whereas in the earliest times the number of women, distinguished for poetical talents, is very considerable; a perceptible decline in this direction is obvious about the second and third century of the Hijra. True, even in later times fine, cultured women are met with especially slave-girls, studiously trained who improvised verses; yet it will not be incorrect to state that the poetical and literary output of women is clearly and sensibly on the wane. Only in Spain, where Arab culture attained its highest splendour, did ladies show a special taste and aptitude for poetry and literature. A great number of poetesses are mentioned whose poems, elegant and lively, point to the epicurean spirit which dominated the court of Cordova, as also those of the later and smaller feudal lords. These poems have for their themes love or panegyrics. Wallada (d. 480 A.H.), the beautiful, who came of a noble family has first place in the charming circle of cultivated women. She was renowned alike for her royal descent and her poetical talents. Her house at Cordova, where her father for a time held the throne, was a centre of wits, savants and poets. The most prominent men of the town vied with each other for her favour which was bestowed with all the caprices of one fair and false. She made no secret of her bold and romantic adventures, and many passages in her poems show that in the court circle and in the highest society the very opposite of prudery prevailed. In the freedom and abandon of her language Wallada was outdone only by her intimate friend, Mugha, one of the loveliest of the women of Cordova. For this reason many passages in her poems cannot be translated. It is noteworthy of her and of her time that she never married, but she managed to compensate herself for it. She sent the following poem to one of her lovers as an invitation to meet her—

"Expect me when the night spreads her darkness;  
 For I know she guardeth my secret in silence;  
 Ah ! were the sun to feel my burning, consuming love,  
 It would not shine nor would the moon rise,  
 Nor would the stars twinkle in heaven."

Against this self-willed, highly endowed woman the East can put forward none save Olayya. She was the Caliph Mahdi's daughter by a slave girl—thus a half-sister of Harun-ul-Rashid. She won a twofold distinction, namely, in poetry and music. She set her songs to music and sang them. For long her compositions retained a great vogue. By her art, her talent, her winsome ways, she enlivened the tedium of the Caliph's palace and exerted, for some time, very considerable influence there. Her one fault was a mole on her forehead, but she managed to get over this drawback. She took to a fillet set with jewels, and it suited her so well that it became popular, and the entire world of fashion adopted the *fillet à la Olayya* as the ornament of the day. Knowing, as we do, the life of the ladies of the higher circles, we need not marvel at the reports of her romantic adventures. One of the Caliph's slaves was the object of Olayya's passionate worship. So violent and uncontrollable was her passion that to visit him she did not hesitate to take a dangerous route which led through a drain-pipe. She alludes to it, in one of her poems —

"Enough, enough is the agony that I have endured for thee—  
O Tall.  
 To visit thee I even took the road that lay perilously between  
 life and death."

Soon her brother, the reigning Caliph Harun, got wind of the affair, and forbade her even to mention the name of Tall. But not long did this order remain in force: for none, not even the Caliph, could resist the charm of this fair and enticing enchantress. She married, but marriage to her was no bar to the enjoyment of life.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Khuda Bukhsh, *Studies : Indian and Islamic*, pp. 97-99. London, 1927.

*The Romance of Lyala and Majnu.* The following lines show the high place which women occupied in the palmy days of Muslim civilisation. It is extracted from the *Romance of Lyala and Majnu* which forms the third poem of the Quintet of the famous poet Nizami. The dates of Nizami's death vary from A. H. 567 (1180-81) given by Daulat Shah, to A. H. 596-99 (1199-1203) by Hajji Khalifa. The German scholar Wilhelm Bacher, who published a learned monograph on the poet, thinks that the date given by Hajji Khalifa is the correct one. Nizami's *Panj Ganj* were *Makbzan ul Ansar*, the Romance of Khusrow and Sheereen, the romance of Lyala and Majnu, the romance of Alexander the Great, and finally the *Haft Paykar*.

The following passage describes how Zayd sees Lyala and Majnu in the gardens of Paradise :

Now when once more the Night's ambrosial dusk  
 Upon the skirts of Day had poured its musk,  
 In sleep an angel caused him to behold  
 The heavenly gardens' radiancy untold,  
 Whose wide expanse, shadowed by lofty trees,  
 Was cheerful as the heart fulfilled of ease.  
 Each flow'ret in itself a garden seemed;  
 Each rosy petal like a lantern gleamed.  
 Each glade reflects, like some sky-scanning eye,  
 A heavenly mansion from the azure sky.  
 Like brightest emeralds its grasses grow,  
 While its effulgence doth no limit know.  
 Goblet in hand, each blossom of the dale  
 Drinks to the music of the nightingale.  
 Celestial harps melodious songs upraise,  
 While cooing ring-doves utter hymns of praise.  
 Beneath the roses, which like sunset gleam,  
 A couch was set beside a rippling stream.  
 With fair brocades and fine this couch was spread,  
 Lustrous and bright as heaven's azure bed.  
 Thereon were seated, now at last at rest,

The immortal angels of these lovers blessed,  
From head to foot adorned with robes of light,  
Like houris fair in heaven's mansions bright.  
Amidst eternal spring their souls they cheer.  
With heav'nly wine, and commune mouth to ear  
Now from the goblet ruby wine they sip;  
Now interchange their kisses, lip to lip;  
Now hidden mysteries of love unfold;  
And now in close embrace each other hold.

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Two virgin jewels these, who long did lie  
Sealed in a casket of pure constancy.  
No joy was theirs within that world of pain,  
Nor ever there did they their hopes attain.  
Here never shall they suffer grief again,  
But as thou seest them shall e'er remain.  
Who in that world hath suffered pain and grief,  
Thus in this world shall find at least relief.  
Who in that world was sorrowful and sad,  
His in this world shall be a portion glad.<sup>28</sup>

## CHAPTER VII

### NEW ELEMENTS IN ISLAM

*The Turks' Service to Islam.* Islam needed a strong champion at the end of the ninth century. The Abbasid Caliphate had disintegrated into fragments, the Arab race had decayed, and the Persians were not powerful enough to keep the Abbasid empire as a unified state. There were multitude of independent States, great and small, but even the most powerful of these, that of the Fatimids, was very far from being able to give solidity to the Abbasid Caliphate, especially as it was Shi'ite. Large regions which had been conquered by the first Caliphs were again lost to the Byzantines, who repeatedly penetrated far into the Mohamadan territory. At this point a new and virile race came to the help of Islam, namely, the Turks. These warriors from Turkistan had played a fitful part in the history of Muslim kingdoms; but now there came a wholesale migration. The Turks pressed forward in great masses from their seats in upper Asia, threw themselves in the first instance upon the lands of Persia. These nomads caused dreadful devastation, trampled to the ground the flourishing civilisation of vast territories, and in their barbarous and rude state, actually destroyed the remains of the civilisation. When the untamed Turks took up with zeal the faith of Islam, which was just within the reach of their intellectual powers, they became its true, often fanatical, champions against the non-believers. They founded the powerful empire of the Seljuks, and conquered new regions for Islam in the north-west. After the downfall of the Seljuk empire, they continued to be the ruling people in its older portions. Had not the Turks injected fresh currents of vitality and initiative into Islam, in that period, the crusaders would have overrun the Middle East, Syria, Iraq, and Asia would have been submerged.<sup>29</sup> This period also witnessed

<sup>29</sup> Theodor Nöldeke, *Sketches from Eastern History*, pp. 98-99.



the remarkable success of the Shi'ites. From what had originally been a political party, a new religious sect had gradually emerged. The doctrine of the divine right of Ali and his descendants had gradually developed into a complete or partial deification. At the beginning of the Abbasid period there were extremists who taught the divinity of Ali without qualification, and if the majority of the Shi'ites repudiated it, they nevertheless believed in a supernatural, divine illumination of Ali and his descendants, the Imams, while a section believed that the spirit of God passed from the one to the other of their descendants. As early as 750, certain sects believed in the messianic return of the Hidden Imam, and put allegorical interpretations upon the *Quran*. From the simple Shi'ism that is essentially Islamic, many intermediate interconnecting links led over to strange sects such as the Druzes and the Nusayrins. The massacre of Hussain followed by Mukhtar's rebellion supplied the essential element of fervour. Mukhtar came forward in the name of Ali's son, Mohammed, and he thereby gained the support of Arabian Shi'ites properly so called, who were devoted to Ali and his house, whereas the Persian adherents of the Shias made it a vital matter and held that only the son of Ali by his wife Fatima were the fully qualified Imams. The first actual Shi'ite empire on a large scale was that of the Fatimid Caliphs, founded about 910 A. D. by Ubaidullah, a descendant of Ali. The Fatimid Caliphs acted with great prudence in their own kingdom, where the Shi'ites were in the minority, though they encouraged revolutionary movements in foreign countries. The Carmathians in Arabia utilised the plundering zeal of the Bedouins for their own ends, threatened the Capital of the Abbasids, preyed upon the pilgrim caravans, and finally, during the pilgrim festival, forced their way on one occasion into Mecca, perpetrated a horrible massacre, and carried off the Black Stone of the Kaaba (930). This dreadful act threw the Muslim world into consternation. The Fatimid Caliph, who seems to have been aware of the secret designs of the Carmathians disavowed this act, but we know that they

acted on his suggestion, and they subsequently (951), after twenty years, at the command of his successor, again restored the holy store for a heavy payment. After their conquest of Egypt, the Fatimids were the most powerful princes of Islam, and it seemed at times that the Abbasid Caliphate would disappear. The Fatimids were excellent rulers, and they made Egypt one of the most prosperous countries of Africa. Unfortunately they too shared the usual fate of Oriental dynasties; the Abbasids lived to see the utter downfall (1171) of their worst rivals, and continued to enjoy for nearly a century longer the empty satisfaction of being named in public prayers in Egypt as Commanders of the Faithful. Since then there has never been another Shi'ite Caliph.<sup>30</sup>

*De Goeje on the Carmathians.* De Goeje in his monograph on the Carmathians has proved that the relations between the Fatimid Caliphs and the Carmathians were intimate, and the Carmathians recognised fully the temporal and spiritual authority of the Fatimid Caliphs, though the latter were sometimes obliged to deny their alliance for reasons of state. Moreover the doctrines of both the sects had many common features, though the Carmathians were not initiated in the highest grade of initiation, in which the return of Muhammad bin Ismail was explained. De Goeje's book gives a graphic account of their organisation.

*The Ismailis.* A brief account must be given of the Ismailis who wielded enormous influence in many parts of Persia, Iraq and Syria for several centuries. The French scholar, Guyard, who wrote a monograph on the subject in 1814, declares that it was primarily a mere subdivision of the Shi'ite or partisans of Ali, but from the time of Abdullah, surnamed Qaddah, the son of Maymun Qaddah, who was the chief of the sect in 864 A. D. it diverged greatly from the basic doctrine of the Shi'ites, and the latter denounced all who embraced it as impious. The sect derived the name of Ismaili from the seventh Imam Ismail, though it was also called *Sab'i*, *Batini*, *Talimi* and *Fatimi*, i.e. those who owed allegiance to the descendants of Fatima, the Prophet's

daughter and Ali's wife; sometimes the Ismailis were confused with the *Qirmati* of *Carmathians*. Their enemies called them *Malahida* and after the organisation of Hasan bin Sbbah they were also called *Hashishi* (Hashish-eaters) and Assassins. Their doctrines were based to a large extent on the number seven and to a less extent on the number twelve. Thus there are seven Planets and twelve Zodiacal signs; seven days in the week and twelve months in the year and so on. Intermediate between God and man are the Five Principles of Emanations (the Universal Reason, the Universal Soul, Primal matter, Pleroma or Space, and Kenoma or Time) making in all seven Grades of Existence. There is no difference between the Shia Asna Isha'ria and the Ismailis as far as the sixth Imam Jafar Sadiq, the great-grandson of Hussain is concerned, and both the sects agree concerning the succession of the first six Imams. The divergence occurs after the sixth Imam. Jafar originally nominated as his successor, his eldest son Ismail, but afterwards his nomination was revoked, and another of his sons, Musa al Kadhim, the seventh Imam, was nominated as the next Imam. Some of the Shias refused to withdraw their allegiance from Ismail, on the ground that nominations could not be revoked, and regarded his son Muhammad as the seventh, Last and Perfect Imam. It was not, however, till the appearance of Abdullah Maymun al-Qaddah that the Ismaili doctrine which had hitherto been merely an ordinary sect of the Shias, emerged as a vigorous and aggressive creed with an elaborate and secretive organisation. The Ismailis refused to acknowledge the authority of any except the descendants of Ismail, though the latter were devoid of ambition, and shunning the dangerous and compromising homage of their partisans, they sought seclusion in Khurasan and Kandhar. Dozy has given an account of the intrigues of the Fatimid Caliphs in Spain. Ubaidullah had scarcely taken possession of the territory of the Aghlabites before he entered into negotiations with Ibn Hafsun the leader of the Spanish Renegades, who led the revolt of Spanish Muslims against the Arabs. The spies of the Fati-

mids traversed all parts of Spain in the guise of merchants, and one of them, Ibn Hawkal, gave an account of his travels in which he said that the inhabitants are spiritless and servile, "they are cowards, they are wretched horsemen, and are wholly incapable of defending themselves against disciplined troops."<sup>31</sup> If the Fatimids had succeeded in gaining a foothold in Andalusia they would undoubtedly have found numerous followers, as the Arab race was true to its tradition of anarchy, and was split up into a number of tribes.

*The Organising Ability of Abdullah.* The accounts which historians have supplied us of Abdullah bin Maymun's capacity for organisation show that Abdullah was one of the greatest organisers of his time. Dozy says that his project was as amazing in boldness and genius as for the assurance and vigour with which it was carried out. To bind together in one association the conquered and the conquerors; to combine in one secret society, wherein, there would be several grades of initiation, the free-thinkers, who saw in religion only a curb for the common people and, the bigots of all sects; to make use of the believers to bring about a reign of unbelievers and of the conquerors to overthrow the empire which they themselves had founded; to form for himself, in short, a party numerous, compact and schooled to obedience, which when the moment came, would give the throne, if not to himself, at least to his descendants; such was the dominant idea of Abdullah al-Maymun; an idea, which grotesque and audacious though it looked, he realised with astonishing tact, an incomparable skill, and a profound knowledge of the human heart<sup>32</sup>

Said, grand-master of the sect, a descendant of Abdullah al-Qaddah, traced his descent to Ali. The real doctrines of the sect were concealed until the beginning of the eleventh century, when the power of the Fatimids was so firmly established that they had nothing to fear. The Fatimids were on the whole capable, tolerant and enlightened rulers, and under their regime Egypt prospered when their power

<sup>31</sup> Dozy, *Spanish Islam*, p. 408.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 403-404.

had been established on a firm basis. They attached little importance to their alleged hereditary right. When Caliph Mizz was asked for proofs of his descent from the Prophet's son-in-law, he replied boldly, as he drew half of his sword from his scabbard, "Behold my genealogy," and then bestowing handfuls of gold upon the bystanders, he cried, "Behold my proofs." Everybody present declared the evidence thus offered irrefutable. Ubaidullah ordered all the Companions of the Prophet, except Ali and four others to be cursed in the public prayers. At first the Ismailis resembled other Muslim sects in their intolerance and cruelty, though the Fatimid Caliphs vigorously pursued their policy of toleration. The early Ismailis, however, bastinadoed, mutilated and crucified learned Fakihs for having spoken with respect of the first three Caliphs, or forgotten a Shi'ite formula, or performed a Fatwa according to the Maliki School. Ubaidullah tried to check the brutality of his soldiers but he did not always succeed. His subjects, who declared that they had no need of an invisible God, willingly deified the Caliph conforming to the ideas of the ancient Persians, who believed in the incarnation of the deity, in the person of the monarch. Atrocities committed by these men in the towns which they captured in North Africa are indescribable. At Barqa their general had some of the citizens cut to pieces and roasted; then after compelling the rest to eat this flesh, he cast all of them into the flames. Plunged in silent stupor, the miserable Africans could only direct their hopes beyond the graves. "Since God permitteth such deeds," wrote a contemporary, "it is manifest that this present world is beneath His notice, but the Last Day will come, and then He will judge." Compare this to the treatment meted out to Dozsa, leader of the Peasants' War in Germany. After his capture, Dozsa was roasted on a red-hot throne and his flesh eaten by his own people, whose lives were granted them only on this condition. The characteristic expression of the sect was the institution of *Dai* who travelled throughout Muslim countries, ostensibly as members of professions, such as merchants, physicians or teachers, and formed a network of devoted supporters whose fiery zeal, strict discipline and passionate fervour, worked wonders. Having

secured the allegiance of the proselyte, the *Dai* bound him by a solemn oath and made him a disciplined soldier of the new organisation.

*The Dai.* The *Dai* has carried on his mission from the time of Abu Muslim to the time of Bahau'llah. Persia is pre-eminently a land of revolutionary creeds, and vigilant *Dais*.

The *Dais* or modern *Babais*, keep up the network of organisation between Persia and the headquarters of the Bahai movement. De Sacy has given a vivid account of the Ismaili sect in his work entitled *Exposé de la Religion des Druzes*.<sup>33</sup>

*Initiation into Ismaili Doctrines.* According to De Sacy there are nine degrees of initiation. In the first degree the neophyte takes the oath of allegiance.

In the second degree he is taught to believe that the Inner Doctrine is essential for the due observance of prescriptions of Islam, which are merely symbols of the Doctrine. The Inner Doctrine must be received from the Imams who are its guardians.

The third degree of initiation informs the neophyte of the nature and number of Imams, and the significance of number seven in the material and spiritual worlds is stressed. This detaches him from the followers of the twelve Imams, the last six Imams of the followers of twelve, according to this doctrine, merit no reverence as they were devoid of spiritual knowledge.

*Fourth Degree.* The neophyte is now taught the doctrine of the Seven Prophetic Periods, of the nature of the *Natiq* the *Sus* or *Asas* and the remaining six *Samits* ("Silent" Imams) who succeed the latter and of the abrogation by each *Natiq* of the religion of his predecessor. The teaching implies that Muhammad was not the last of the Prophets; and the further deduction is that the *Quran* is not God's final revelation. The seventh and the last *Natiq*, Mohammed bin Ismail, inaugurated the science of *tawil* or the science of

<sup>33</sup> Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. I, pp. 407-15, for an excellent account of the sect.



Allegorical Interpretation, which puts an end to the *Ulumul-awwalin*, or the "Sciences of the Ancients."

*Fifth Degree.* The neophyte is given further instruction in the science of numbers, is told to discard many traditions, speaks contemptuously of the state of religion and is advised to pay less and less heed to the letter of the Scripture. The significance of the number Twelve is stressed.

*Sixth Degree.* The allegorical meanings of the rules of Islam such as alms, pilgrimage, fasting, etc. are explained to him. They are merely shells and may be abandoned, as they were designed for only the vulgar herd.

*Seventh Degree.* Only the leading *Dais* can be initiated in the seventh and eight degrees. In this degree the dualistic doctrine of the Pre-existent and the Subsequent, is initiated, and belief in the Doctrine of the Divine Unity is weakened.

*Eighth Degree.* The doctrine mentioned in the seventh degree is developed at this stage, and the neophyte now learns the implications of the Pre-existent and Subsequent. The two are comprehended in a being that has neither name nor attribute, to whom no worship can be rendered. There is evidently trace of Zoroastrian doctrine here though even Ismailis were not clear on the point. All that we are told is that this nameless being seems to represent *Zerwan Akarana* (boundless time) of the Zoroastrian system. This is Professor Browne's interpretation, but I am inclined to think that it shows distinct traces of Dualism and Materialism. The truth of the doctrine must be tested by its capacity to construct a pattern of political, social, religious, and philosophical life which will endure. Like other basic doctrines of Islam, the Resurrection, future rewards and punishments and the end of the world are explained away and an allegorical interpretation is supplied to these as to other tenets of religion.

*Ninth Degree.* Finally, the dogmas of religion are virtually discarded in the ninth degree, and the initiate becomes a philosopher, pure and simple, and is free to have

any system or combinations of systems which he deems necessary for his salvation.

*An-Nuwayri* (1332 A. D.) upon whose account De Sacy based his *Exposé de la Religion des Druzes*, which was published in Paris in 1838, declares that in the ninth degree the neophyte embraces the views of the Manes or Bardesanes, sometimes he adopts the Magian system, sometimes that of Plato or Aristotle. Generally he borrows from the systems and notions which he tries to compare together with varying success.

This account is based wholly upon De Sacy's work which he based on *An-Nuwayri's* work, and the author accepts no responsibility for the truth of these statements. It is impossible for me to state how far the above account is an impartial and objective analysis of Ismaili doctrines. It is possible that *Al-Nuwayri* either misunderstood or misrepresented the Ismaili doctrine or the account may be substantially correct. De Sacy, the French translator of the work, can hardly be regarded as an authority on the subject. Finally, these doctrines may have been inculcated in the early stages of the movement, and the lapse of ten centuries must have introduced substantial changes in the doctrines. Unfortunately no authoritative exposition of the Ismaili creed has been published so far, and a non-Ismaili finds it impossible to discuss the subject in a scientific spirit. The account was written in the fourteenth century and it is highly probable that the Ismaili doctrines have changed fundamentally during the six centuries which have elapsed since the book was written. It is unnecessary to state that I am greatly indebted to Professor E. G. Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. I, pp. 405-15, for the account of the Ismaili doctrines given here.

India is deeply grateful to the Ismailis for the services they have rendered in every sphere of her activity and is especially indebted to His Highness the Aga Khan for his work for the freedom and greatness of our motherland.

*Marco Polo's Account of Fidais.* Marco Polo has given a most interesting account of the initiation of Fidais or Devot-

ed ones in the account of his travels. They were later on called Assassins, and the title according to De Sacy was derived from the Arabic word *Hashish*, or Indian hemp which they are alleged to have used for their victims. Hasan-i-Sabbah arrived at Cairo on August 30, 1078 A. D., and stayed there for eighteen months. The Caliph Al-Mustansir was then the supreme head of the Ismailis. After Al-Mustansir's death in 1094 A. D., the Ismailis were divided into two rival groups, owing to the rival claims of his two sons Mustaali and Nisar, and there were two groups, a western group which included Egypt, North Africa, and an eastern group, which included Persia, Syria and parts of Iraq. Hasan-i-Sabbah was obliged to leave Cairo owing to the jealousy of Mustaali and by a brilliant manouvre which is vividly described in *Tarikh-i-Guzidah* captured the mountain-fortress of Alamut which was originally called Aluh-amu't. Ibn Athir explains as Ta'lim-al-al-Aqab, the "Eagles" teachings, though it is incorrectly translated as the "Eagle's Nest." The capture of Alamut was followed by the seizure of other strongholds. The followers of Hasan-i-Sabbah separated organisationally from the followers of Mustalli, who became the Fatimid Caliph of Cairo. The Ismailis of Egypt in the west are henceforth distinguished from the Ismailis of Persia or "Nizaris." It is the Nizaris to whom the word Assassin is applied. I cannot deal with the history of the Assassins during the next two centuries. They wielded enormous influence throughout the Middle East and even Caliphs and kings were terrified at their name and power and were not free from their attacks.

*Hasan-i-Sabbah's Influence.* Hasan-i-Sabbah's power reached Syria and his name was a terror throughout Asia. He put to death his two sons on the suspicion of adultery and drinking, and died in 1124. The Athir gives numerous references to the activities of this sect. In their first great achievement, they assassinated the great Nizam-ul-Mulk, Prime Minister of Malik Shah. This was followed at short intervals by the assassination of many leading men such as Qazi Abul-Ala Said of Nishapur in 1105-1106 A. D. and Fakhr-ul-Mulk, one of the sons of the Nizam-ul-Mulk, in

1106-7. Next we find that the judges of Isphahan and Nishapur were assassinated. The Fatimid Caliph al-Amir Biramrullah and Abu Ali bin Afzal the Wazir of his successor were assassinated. Next two Abbasid Caliphs were murdered; the Abbasid Caliph al-Mustarshid in 1137-38 A. D. Jawhar who was a courtier of Sanjar was also assassinated. There were terrible reprisals on the part of the orthodox and we hear hundreds of Batinis being massacred in the twelfth century A. D. The civil wars which raged furiously in the early part of the twelfth century gave the Assassins a wonderful opportunity for the consolidation of their power. Those who feared the vengeance of the Assassins used to wear a shirt of mail under their clothes. The power of the Assassins was destroyed by Hulagu. Two of the strongholds of Assassins in Kohistan, Tun and Khwaf were captured in 1256, and all the inhabitants who were ten years of age were massacred. The chief of the Assassins Ruknuddin surrendered to the Mongols on November 19, and Alamut and Maymun-dizh were pillaged and burnt. All the strongholds of the Assassins in Persia were captured; but the Syrian branch was never completely destroyed, and there are still numerous Ismalis in Syria. When he arrived at Qaraqorum, Mangu Khan ordered execution of the Assassins and issued instructions that all surviving disciples were to be exterminated. Thousands must have been destroyed but a remnant remained and there is a prosperous colony in India and Chitral, in parts of Tejikistan, and they have a substantial following in Zanzibar, Syria and in Persia. The extermination of Assassins was hailed by the orthodox Muslims throughout the world and Hulagu Khan was praised by these bigots for his abominable cruelties.

*The Mongol Invasion—the Sack of Baghdad.* Two years hence the fanatics found that their approval of Hulagu Khan had been imprudent, for he began the sack of Baghdad on February 13, 1258 and continued it for a week. After the Mongols had besieged the city on every side on January 22, on the 30th they made a general assault. The Caliph sent his envoy to Halagu on February 4, and deceived by false promises, the miserable Caliph surrendered himself to the

barbarian. Muslim historians declare that he was wrapped in a carpet and beaten to death with clubs. This is substantially correct, as the Mongols never shed royal blood and they used to execute the princes by breaking their backs. The loss suffered by Muslim learning through the sack of Baghdad is impossible to calculate. It never recovered from the blow which it received in this tragic year. It is calculated that eight hundred thousand inhabitants perished, while the priceless treasures and objects of literary, scientific and artistic interest which had accumulated during five centuries of organic activity, and represented the mature wisdom and ripe learning of hundreds of scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, statesmen and Faqihs were ruthlessly destroyed by these ferocious barbarians. Muslim learning has not yet recovered from the loss which it sustained in this catastrophic year. It was not merely the loss of priceless works, manuscripts, but the destruction of hundreds of men of learning and culture who were killed, or barely escaped with their lives, which dealt a grievous blow to research, and accurate scholarship. Profound philosophical and scientific studies never recovered from the blow which Muslim learning suffered by the capture of Baghdad. Never has a magnificent civilisation been so swiftly consumed with fire. The author of the *Kitab-ul-Fakbri* who wrote in 1302 A. D. forty-four years after this catastrophe, describing the storming of Baghdad, states that there took place "such wholesale slaughter and unrestrained looting and excessive torture and mutilation as it is hard to hear spoken of even generally; how think you, then of its details? There happened what happened of things I like not to mention; therefore imagine what you will, but ask me not of the matter." There are conflicting accounts of the conduct of the Caliph's Shia Wazir Muhammad Ibn-Alqami in this emergency. The fanatical author of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* showers curses upon his name for his treason against the Caliph. The author says that he deliberately reduced the number of the garrison, declares that he induced the Caliph to surrender to the barbarian, as his object was to avenge certain wrongs which had been done to the followers of the Shia sect by the eldest son of Caliph. On the other hand, the Shia writer Ibnu't

Tiqtiqi declares the charge against the Wazir to be false. I am bound to say that there is no evidence to substantiate the charge, and it is possible that Ibnul-Alqami was deceived by the false promises of the crafty Mongol, and in this matter, acted in concert with, and on the advice of Nasir-ud-Din Tusi, who was a double-dyed traitor. Tusi was the author of one of the best works upon ethics, *Akblaq-i-Nasari*. In his life, he failed to act on moral principles which he expounded with grace and charm. He first betrayed his Ismaili host and fellow countrymen, and then he convinced Hulagu, when he was deliberating upon the fate of the last Abbasid Caliph, that God will not be displeased with the execution of the unfortunate Caliph. If ambition was the object of the Wazir of the last Caliph, he did not live long enough to realise it as he died only three months after the death of his master. Though it would be prudent to suspend judgment upon the conduct of the ex-Wazir, the double treason of Nizam ud Din Tusi is beyond doubt, and is proved by a mass of material.

*The Atrocities of Carmathians.* The Ismailis, as well as the Carmathians, derived their inspiration, support and strength from the Fatimid Caliphs of Egypt. In January, 930, the Carmathians committed their greatest atrocity. Abu Tahir with an army of six hundred horsemen and nine hundred infantry entered the sacred city of Mecca, killed, plundered and imprisoned the Meccans, and carried off the Black Stone and other sacred relics. In this appalling atrocity, thirty thousand Muslims were slain, of whom one thousand nine hundred met their death in the precincts of the Kaaba itself. The horrible scene which accompanied these atrocious acts cannot be adequately described, and will be found in De Goeje's learned monograph upon the Carmathians. The booty carried off by the Carmathians was immense. The Ismailis were not guilty of such atrocious acts, and the Fatimid Caliphs were extremely careful in their dealings with the people of Egypt, as the bulk of the Egyptian population did not profess the Shi'ite faith. It is impossible for me to deal with a number of other sects which arose during this period.



*The Kharejites.* The Kharejites were the Calvinists of Islam, and in North Africa they found their Scotland. The most democratic in Islam, they split up into a number of sections, but the doctrines upon which all sections agreed was that every free Arab was eligible for Caliphship, and, secondly, that an evil-doing Caliph must be deposed, and, if necessary, put to death. The Kharejite programme was the old Islam of equality and fraternity, which had never been fully realised, and had been corrupted by the Prophet's successors. Theoretically all Muslims believed in these doctrines; but the Kharejites were specially distinguished from the other Muslims by the rigour, severity and fanaticism with which they acted upon these principles. To them it was absolutely essential that the Imam or the head of the community should rule in the name and according to the Will of God. According to the Kharejites, Muslims who refused to execrate Osman and Ali were the worst of infidels. It was the duty of every true believer to take part in a holy war against such people and to exterminate them. There was a difference of opinion among the Kharejites as to the way in which the wives and children of heretics should be treated. The extreme section declared that the wives and children of such 'infidels' were also to be exterminated while the moderate section said their lives should be spared, so that when the children grow up they may imbibe the true Kharejite doctrine. The Kharejites remind one of the extreme Calvinistic sects which Sir Walter Scott described in his novels such as the *Old Mortality*. The fear of hell roused their inquisitorial zeal for the faith and they derived inspiration from the persecutions, martyrdoms and ultimate triumph of early Islam, just as the Puritans of England, derived their inspiration from the persecution which their forefathers had borne in the time of Bloody Mary and of Charles I. Professor R. A. Nicholson has given two examples of the Kharejite poems. One is translated from Tabari, in which a Kharejite in prison expresses his feelings in the following characteristic lines—

"'Tis time, O ye Sellers, for one who hath sold himself  
To God, that he should arise and saddle again.

Fools ! in the land of miscreants will ye abide,  
 To be hunted down, every man of you, and to be slain ?  
 O would that I were among you, armed in mail,  
 On the back of my stout-ribbed galloping war-horse again ?  
 And would that I were among you, fighting your foes,  
 That me, first of all, they might give death's beaker to drain !  
 It grieves me sore that ye are startled and chased  
 Like beasts, while I cannot draw on the wretches profane  
 My sword, nor see them scattered by noble knights  
 Who never yield an inch of the ground they gain  
 But where the struggle is hottest, with keen blades hew  
 Their strenuous way and deem 'their base to refrain.  
 Ay, it grieves me sore that ye are oppressed and wringed,  
 While I must drag in anguish a captive's chain."

The second poem is by Qatari, the valorous Kharejite leader, who fought heroically against Hajjaj. The verses cited here would, according to Ibn Khallikan, make a brave man of the greatest coward in the world. Khallikan declared that he knew nothing on the subject to be compared with this piece—

I say to my soul dismayed—  
 "Courage ! Thou canst not achieve,  
 With praying, an hour of life  
 Beyond the appointed term.  
 Then courage on death's dark field,  
 Courage ! Impossible 'tis  
 To live for ever and aye.  
 Life is no hero's robe  
 Of honour : the dastard vile  
 Also doffs it at last."

## CHAPTER VIII

### OTHER NON-CONFORMIST SECTS AND THE SHIA-SUNNI CONFLICT

I have so far confined myself to the administration of the Abbasid Caliphate. It is, however, necessary to say something about the rest of dissenters in Islam whose contribution to the growth of mental freedom among Muslims has not been impartially assessed. While the dogmas and traditions of Islam had been systematised and codified by a succession of brilliant Muslim jurists, a number of sects arose in the Middle East and North Africa whose doctrines differed in many respects from the orthodox creed. They were treated as heretics by the orthodox, and severe measures were adopted against them. The fanatical sectaries retaliated and perpetrated atrocities against the orthodox. In 909 A. D., the Ismailis succeeded in establishing the Fatimite dynasty in Egypt, under the leadership of Ubeidullah. Another sect, the Carmathians, who followed Karmak, was active in Arabia and the Middle East. The Ismailis and the Carmathians seem to have worked in concert. The Carmathians entered Basra in 924 A. D. and five years later they laid siege to Mecca, and, to the horror of the Muslim world, carried off the sacred Black Stone, which they kept for twenty years. They also entered Kufa and took possession of *Ummam*. The Fatimite Caliphs and the Carmathians had an informal understanding and worked in secret. Von Kremer has discussed the four primary divisions among the Muslims on religious, as distinguished from political, principles. They are the *Murjiya*, the *Mutazila* or *Qadiriya*, the *Kharejite* and the Shi'ite. The extreme Shia sects with their doctrine of Incarnation (*Hulul*) Return (*Rijct*) and Metempsychosis (*Tanasukh*) are not included in these categories. Shahrastani has enumerated seven principles of the heterodox sects. Full details of the sects will be found in Steiner's monograph on Mutazilite. The

number of revolutionary sects is considerable. According to Browne<sup>34</sup> these sects under the leadership of *Sindbad the Magian*, *al-Muqanna*, "the veiled Prophet of Khurasan," *Babak*, and others, caused commotion in Persia during this period. These sects reassert, like the later Isma'ilis, Batinis, Carmathians, Assassins, and Hurufis, the same essential doctrines of Anthropomorphism, Incarnation, Pre-incarnation or 'Return' and Metempsychosism. These doctrines appear to have been endemic in Persia under a suitable stimulus. In modern times, they have appeared again in Babi movement, of which, especially in its original form, from 1844-1852 A.D., they constituted the kernel; though, in its later stages, under the guidance of *Baha 'Ullah* (1892 A.D.), and of his son Abbas Efendi, "the Most Great Branch" (who appears to be regarded by his followers as a "Return" of Jesus Christ, and is so considered by the now fairly numerous adherents of this doctrine in America), they have been relegated to a subordinate, or at least a less conspicuous position. The resemblance between these numerous sects, whose history can be clearly traced through the last eleven centuries and a half, is most remarkable, and extends even to minute details of terminology and to the choice of particular colours (especially red and white) as badges. Thus the early Bahais, like the Mubayyida of the period now under discussion, wore white apparel, while they imitated the *Muhammira* in their fondness for red by their choice of that colour in transcribing their books. Schismatics swarmed round the country, and the Ismailis became powerful, and were the terror of their neighbours. A vital force was needed to gather up the fragments of the independent Muslim principalities and combine them into a powerful state. The Turks supplied this element. These virile nomads embraced Islam with all the fervour of their rugged personality. They came to the rescue of a dying state and revived it. They swarmed over Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Asia Minor, devastating the country and destroying all the dynasties that existed there. By their rugged energy, and organising prudence, they succeeded in temporarily uniting Muhammadan Asia, from the western

frontier of Afghanistan to the Mediterranean, under one sovereign; "they put a new life into the expiring zeal of the Muslims, drove back the re-encroaching Byzantines, and bred up a generation of fanatical Muhammadan warriors to whom, more than anything else, the crusaders owed their repeated failure. This it is that gives the Seljuks so important a place in Mohammadan history."

The Seljuks were the progenitors of the Osmanli Turks who established themselves first in Asia Minor, and afterwards in Syria, Egypt, the Mediterranean, Europe and North Africa. The Mongol invasion facilitated the trek of Turks to the West. It was the Mongols who drove the Turkish hordes of Estoghrol and Osman to the west, until their wanderings led to their settlement in Asia Minor. The Seljuks were a branch of the Ghuzz Turks who in 1029 A.D. had begun to overrun the north and east of Persia. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna was greatly perturbed by this movement. They came originally from Turkistan to Transoxiana and chose as their winter quarters Nur of Bukhar, while their summer pasture grounds were Sughd and Samarkand. One of the greatest ministers of the period was Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Seljuks did render invaluable service to culture by their patronage of scientists, historians, poets, physicians and astronomers. Like nearly all the Turks the Seljuks after their conversion to Islam became rigidly orthodox and the wars between Sultan Salim I and Shah Ismail of Persia were not only wars between two countries, but also wars between two sects of Islam. Shiaism became the state religion in Persia in the time of Shah Ismail and the correspondence between Sultan Salim and Shah Ismail which has been published shows the intensity of the feeling, among the followers of the two sects. Salim persecuted the Shias in his kingdom and Shah Ismail persecuted the Sunnis in Persia. The influence of the Shia Ulema in Persia remained supreme till the fall of the Kajar dynasty in the present days. The Turks remained fervent champions of Sunni orthodoxy, until Mustafa Kamal Pasha separated religion from the state. The development of Shia theology for the last four hundred years has been remarkable and

a summary of its progress may be studied in Professor Browne's *Literary History of Persia*. It is sufficient to state here that the Persian race has expressed its genius in a creed which is in harmony with its intellectual tradition and historic mission.

*Establishment of Shi'ism as State Religion.* The establishment of Shi'ism as state religion in Persia under Shāh Ismail, and the championship of the Sunni creed by Salim I, was followed by the persecution of Sunnis by Shias, and *vice versa*. This reduced the number of heretics in Islamic countries. The wars that were carried on by Shah Ismail and Salim I were from one point of view Shia-Sunni wars, while from another point of view they may be regarded as a perennial fight between the two races—Turks and Persians. There were massacres by both parties, and racial cleavage was intensified by religious fanaticism. The Turks suffered many defeats and some brilliant officers were slain. Among them was the Wazir Khadim Ali Pasha, and several others. A rebellion of Salim's Shia subjects was put down mercilessly, and forty thousand persons are reported to have been slain. Shah Ismail was no less ruthless than Salim I. Having captured Baku, Ismail, advised in a dream by the Imam, decided to raise the siege of Gulistan and march on Azerbaijan. After defeating the Turkoman "White Sheep," Ismail entered Tabriz in triumph, and was there crowned King of Persia in 907 A. H. At this place, he resolved on the assumption of the kingly rank, proclaimed that the Shia faith should become not merely the state religion, but the only tolerated creed. He ordained the public cursing of the first three Caliphs of Sunnis, Abu Bakr, Omar and Osman, and decreed that all who heard the cursing should respond, "May it be more, not less." Those who refused to give this response were to be killed. He also instituted the public cursing of Abu Bakr, Omar and Osman in the streets and markets and threatened recalcitrants with punishment. Shia theology was encouraged and the doctrines of the Shia creed were expounded by able, earnest and pious theologians of Persia, and they maintained this position till the deposition of the Kajar dynasty in the present century. The Shia faith be-



came the state religion. Shah Ismail's treatment of prisoners was atrocious, and many cruelties were perpetrated in his reign. His rival, Sultan Salim I, was no less cruel and fanatical. Persian genius blossomed forth under the Safawi dynasty, and the country's progress was exemplified by the extension of trade and commerce, the patronage of scholars and holy men and the expansion of the empire. It is unfortunate for Islam that the two great Muslim countries, Persia and Turkey, have carried on a fierce struggle for centuries, and have never been able to combine against a common foe. In the time of Nadir Shah, it was a war of races and not of creeds, but his reign was only an interlude in the perennial conflict between the two peoples. Feridun Bey's great collection of Turkey's state papers entitled the *Munshaat-i-Salat* which was compiled in 1574 gives a good account of the diplomatic negotiations between Persia and Turkey from the time of Sultan Bayazid II, 1482-1512 A. D. to the time of Suleiman I, 1520-1566 A. D.

*Rivalry between Shias and Sunnis and Turkey and Persia.* The establishment of the Shia sect as the state religion of Persia and the Sunni creed as the religion of orthodox Islam, reduced the number of sects in Islam. I have already given a brief account of the main sects in an early part of this book. I conclude this account by bringing up to date the accounts of some of the sects which have survived in modern times. Of the other small sects which have been discussed above, Zaidis are to be found in South Africa and in parts of North Africa; Ismailis are to be found in India, Zanzibar, East Africa, Chitral, Tajikistan, Syria and Portuguese East Africa; Druzes and the Nusyrites are to be found in Lebanon and enclosed in the circuit of provincial pride and shut up in their mountain fortresses are the Sharifs of Morocco, who are Sunnites and antedate all theological differences. At Zanzibar Uman and the Mzab in Algeria, the descendants of the fierce Kharejites are to be found. India also contains a large number of Muslim sects and there are a small number of Kharejites. Finally, Yemen has had a succession of dynasties starting with Zaidis who ruled from 204 to 409

A. H. and ending with the Imams of Sana. Sana became the permanent capital of the Imamate of the Yemen, after the expulsion of the Turks from Yemen in 1633 A. D. The Imams have given a succession of rulers to the country. The founder was Qasim Mansur, a descendant of Yusuf Da'i, the great grandson of Hadi Yabyab, the founder of the Rassid Imamate. He started his Imamate in 1,000 A. H. and ruled for twenty-nine years.

Arabia under the Umayyads and the Abbasids did not differ materially from pre-Islamic days. The Prophet had succeeded in uniting Arabia, but the Islamic doctrine of equality and fraternity, which has been a source of inspiration to millions throughout the ages, and is the noblest contribution of Islam to humanity, was not practised by the Arabs in their dealings with non-Arabs. This was due to the exclusiveness and the racial pride of the Arabs, whose treatment of Clients or *Mawalis* has been discussed earlier. The Arabs gave way to the Persians, and the latter to the Turks, and racial differences were expressed in religious cleavage. To put it in other words, nationalism assumed a religious garb to express its claims to freedom and self-expression. The geographical factor also comes into play. The rugged mountaineers of North Africa were always ready for a religious revival, and religious reformers, however wild and fantastic they might be, found in Morocco and Algiers fertile soil for their new-fangled creeds. It is curious that Persians have always shown a tendency to invest their religious leaders with the absolutism which the king of pre-Islamic Persia exercised over their subjects. The national characteristics of Arabs and Persians were expressed in their religious views. This has been admirably developed by Dozy in his *History of Islam*, "Although the Shi'ites found themselves under the direction of Arab leaders who utilised them in order to gain some personal end, they were nevertheless a Persian sect at bottom. For the Persians, the principle of electing the Prophet's successor was something unheard of and incomprehensible. The hatred which they felt for the government and for the Arab rule confirmed them in their opinion; at the same time, they

cast covetous eyes on the wealth of their masters. Seeing in their kings the descendants of the inferior divinities, they transferred this idolatrous veneration to Ali and his posterity." Dozy exaggerates the part which the tradition of absolutism played in moulding the religious ideals of the Persians. The Turks expressed their racial characteristics by championing Sunni orthodoxy and suppressing schismatics. The wars which raged furiously between Persia and Turkey for nearly three centuries from the sixteenth to the nineteenth, were the result of deep racial cleavage, which the doctrine of fraternity of Islam could not obliterate. They are in fact described as wars of religion by historians of both the countries. In this conflict, nationalism proved stronger than the religious motive, and religion was exploited for imperialistic designs. The doctrine of 'one state, one religion' was expressed in Germany in the sixteenth century but the rule was firmly established in Muslim countries by the end of the fifteenth century. Asia cannot be blamed for following an obscurantist policy in an age of religious fervour. Europe followed the same policy. In 1526, at a Diet Session at Speyer, it was for the first time decreed that the subject must follow the faith of the master. In September, 1555, the Augsburg Diet confirmed this decision. With the establishment of Shi'ism as state religion by Shah Ismail in 907 A. H., and the consolidation of the orthodox Sunni creed under Sultan Salim I, mental freedom in the Islamic world received a serious setback, and the principles of the two creeds were developed by their respective champions with great zeal and enthusiasm. Every aspect of man's life was brought under mental discipline, and any deviation from the norm subjected the transgressor to severe penalties. The treatment of heretics by champions of rival sects was cruel in the extreme. When Rais Muhammad Karra of Abarquh rebelled against Shah Ismail, the latter confined him in a cage and smeared his body with honey, and the miserable man was stung by wasps and suffered excruciating agony until he was burnt alive in the *maidan* of Isfahan.

*Rise of Shah Ismail.* In 1510 Shah Ismail marched into Khorasan against the Uzbeks and crushed them at the battle

of Merv. Shaybani Khan, whom our Emperor Babar detested, was amongst the slain. His body was dismembered, his limbs were distributed amongst different cities and his skull, set in gold, was made into drinking cup by Shah Ismail. The skin of his head, stuffed with straw, was sent to Sultan Baya zidt Ista'bul. One of his hands constituted the gruesome credentials of Shah Ismail's ambassador, who had been sent by him to the ruler of Mazandaran, one of Ismail's vassals. Sultan Bayazid was no less cruel than Shah Ismail, but I spare the reader an account of the Sultan's cruelties on the occasion of Ismail's second entry into Tabriz in 1520 A. D. He was ruthless towards the Sunnis, and eminent divines such as Fariduddin Ahmad and renowned poets like Bannai were put to death.<sup>34</sup>

*Quarrel between Salim I and Shah Ismail.* The bitter strife between Turkey and Persia destroyed the unity and solidarity of Islam. The rivalry between Shah Ismail and Sultan Salim I is clear from the correspondence of the Sultan which was published at Constantinople in 1858. A letter of Sultan Salim, dated April, 1514, addressed to Shah Ismail, and couched in the most arrogant and offensive style, exhorts Shah Ismail to repent his heresy and evil deeds, especially the cursing of the two Shaykhs (Abu Bakr and Omar) and warns him that, in case he remains obdurate, the Sultan will wrest from him "the lands which he has usurped by violence." In another undated letter addressed to Shah Ismail, the Sultan lays claim to the Caliphate, and calls upon Ismail to repent and suffer Persia to be annexed to the Sultan's empire. In a third letter dated July 23, 1514, the Sultan taunts him with unwillingness to try the hazards of war. I have deemed it necessary to give an unbiased and impartial account of sects in Islam, and have studiously refrained from taking sides. In tracing the rise of these sects, I have simply recorded facts and have not justified the policy of Shah Ismail or Salim I, nor have the cruelties perpetrated by these rulers on the adherents of rival sects been condoned.

<sup>34</sup> *Travels of Venetians in Persia*, published by the Hakluyt Society, London, 1873. Professor Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, Volumes III and IV, have been consulted throughout for this period.

Judged by the standards of the modern age which postulates religious toleration, and guarantees freedom even to atheists and agnostics, the cruelties of these kings cannot be condoned and must be strongly condemned. If, however, this question is judged from the point of view of the Middle Ages, they seem to have been justified on the principle that the religion of the subject must follow the religion of the ruler. This principle was accepted at the Diet of Augsburg, in Germany in the sixteenth century, and was rigorously enforced sometimes through the tortures of the Inquisition, throughout Europe for several centuries. Shah Ismail and Salim I acted on the same principle when they subjected dissenters from state religion to cruelties. From this point of view, they cannot be condemned, and in the opinion of many persons the measures they adopted were essential for the safety not merely of the religion which they professed but also of the state of which they were the heads.

Unlike other historians, I am inclined to think that the emergence of various sects such as Carmathians, Kharejites, Ismailis, Wahabis, Zaidis, Bahais, and Mutazilites was a sign of vitality in Islam. The services rendered by various sects of Shias to the cause of religious freedom must be duly acknowledged. They fought and sacrificed for the sacred principle of liberty of conscience, and they succeeded in developing a culture, and expressing it in the state religion of Persia, which are the pride and glory of the entire Islamic world. The work of Ismailis in Egypt and other places cannot be too highly praised. It was a tragedy that the Mutazilite doctrines were suppressed by the fanatical Caliph Mutawakkil.

Had the Mutazilites been allowed to propagate their doctrines, it would have led to free and unhampered investigation into the natural phenomena, and the development of science would have been its natural result. Had toleration of different Muslim creeds been allowed the social energy of the peoples of those countries would have been released for constructive work, and feudalism would have been overthrown. In later times the Wahabis destroyed many of

the superstitions which had devitalised Islam in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Muslims of the present age must regard the activities of these sects from the point of view of the modern age. They should ignore the small differences that divide them, and regard them as a manifestation of vitality in Islam. There are different aspects of Islam, though some emphasise one aspect more than the other. Vested interests have prevented a rational view of theological differences, but to those who are Muslims first, and Shias or Sunnis afterwards, all these differences are petty, insignificant, and trivial compared to the massive fabric of the basis upon which all Muslims are united. The Arabs had appropriated the matter of Greek authors, but as they never learnt the Greek language and relied mainly upon translations, they failed to reproduce and assimilate their form. This was no great loss so far as literature is concerned, and in the Arabic language—a most flexible instrument of expression—they possessed an instrument adapted to their needs, and correlated to the living language of the people. In the process of adaptation of the Arabic language to the needs of science, theology, diplomacy and administration, a division was unfortunately effected between the highly educated classes and the illiterate masses, and the Arabic language appeared to follow two separate and divergent courses. Upon the briar of superstition, ignorance and illiteracy were grafted the highly cultivated roses of philosophy and science. The practical and positive quality which the scientists, the administrators and others displayed, were not grasped by the Baghdad mob. The great Shia divines and brilliant jurists of the Schools of Hanbal, Malik and Abu Hanifa, had stamped their own genius on the material, adopted and retouched the form, and modified the sentiment, converting all they took to their own use. The *Dewan* of the great Ismaili poet, Nasiri Khusrow, shows the political vigour, the martial energy, the cohesive force of a rugged personality, and these qualities enlivened his creed, and the creed, in turn, deflected him from sonorousness of verbiage and subtleties of style to the tangible or the concrete. There is evidence to believe that the gulf between the lettered and unlettered classes continued to widen, and writings of



philosophers, jurists, scientists and theologians were studied by a select band of scholars, who failed to influence the policy of the state and were barely tolerated in an age of rabid fanaticism. Had knowledge of science and art been widely diffused, the differences among Muslims would have been mitigated, the doctrines of different sects would have been toned down and incorporated in the substance of Muslim thought. This would have reacted on the social basis of the state, and the feudalism in which most of the Muslim states of Asia and North Africa were enmeshed for a thousand years would have been replaced by democratic states, in which the common man would have been granted his legitimate rights. The golden era of culture was unfortunately followed by intellectual and political stagnation of Muslim states which is without a parallel in the history of the world. Muslims were the greatest theologians, statesmen and jurists of the Middle Ages. They preserved, explained and developed the conception of democracy, they built up the foundations of culture; they preferred the tangible and concrete to the visionary and abstract, the definite to the indefinite, the sensuous to the ideal. All these qualities seemed to have deserted them in the days of their decline. Instead of objective realism, and spontaneous passion, which we find exemplified in the works of Arab geographers, historians, scientists and jurists, we find debased imagination, and metaphysical subtleties worthy of Greek sophists. The austerities of religion had been humanised by a literature which clothed thoughts with forms of beauty. The golden age of the Abbasids and the Umayyads of Spain had yielded to the world a second crop of flowers and fruitage similar to that which had been produced in Greece and Rome.

Muslim jurists and theologians, wholly unaware of the stupendous progress which science and commerce had made in Western Europe, were busy fighting rival sects and denouncing every scientific discovery as heresy. The works on theology which were published in this period of decline have the mark of stagnation and reaction indelibly stamped upon them. The number of commentaries on religious subjects is countless. A portion of the theological literature of this decadent period is unprofitable: some

learned writer writes a treatise on an abstruse subject; somebody else writes a commentary on this work; a third produces a super-commentary; a fourth writer composes a glossary on the super-commentary; and a fifth a note on the glossary. At the end we are confronted with what the immortal Turkish wit, Khoja Nasru'd Din Effendi called "soup of the soup of the soup of the hare-soup." Such commentaries are worthless, devoid of matter and an example of misspent energy. Shaikh Muhammad Abduh, who was a most enlightened thinker and an erudite scholar of the Arabic language, used to say that all this stuff should be burned, since it merely cumbered bookshelves, bred maggots and obscured knowledge. Shaikh Muhammad Abduh was one of the greatest theologians of the age, and was Grand Mufti of Egypt and Chancellor of the University of Al-Azhar.<sup>35</sup>

The remarks of Shaikh Muhammad Abduh on the quality of theological works confirm the estimate of this period and show conclusively that the elements of dynamism and mental vigour were already worked out and exhausted at the end of the sixteenth century, and the masonry of the Abbasids was succeeded by the filigree work of the *Clingue Cento*. Theologians are too busy fighting rival creeds; Sunni divines wrangling with Shias, and Shia Mujtahids fighting Sunni divines to find time to purge Islam of superstitions, so that it may resume its tradition of a progressive and dynamic religion.

The principles of toleration and fraternity which Islam had inculcated were completely forgotten by ambitious monarchs who used religion as a cloak for imperialistic designs. Had Muslim rulers applied them vigorously, Muslim empire would have remained united, and Islam would have remained a positive factor in the progress of humanity in the present century. But the fissiparous tendencies which nationalism intensified could not be checked, and the ambitious rulers of powerful kingdoms found little difficulty in justifying their rapacious actions in the guise of religion.

*Arabia under the Caliphs.* The history of Arabia under the Abbasid and Ottoman Caliphs exhibits the same features. Islam has preached the doctrine of equality and fraternity of the believers, yet the Arabs in Arabia remained enclosed in their racial pride. The unity of the people was undermined by many disconnected tribes headed by chiefs, and many Arab towns and districts were governed by Sheikhs who at times asserted their independence and styled themselves Amirs or Imams.<sup>36</sup> The Caliphs appointed a governor of the Yemen and a sub-governor of Mecca and Medina, but the outlying towns recognised only the authority of their local chiefs. The beginning of the third century of the Hijra saw the dismemberment of the great Islamic empire by the rise of powerful dynasties on its skirts. In the year 785 A. D., an insurrection of the partisans of the family of Ali took place at Medina, and among those who took part in it was Idris, a descendant of Abu Talib. The revolt was suppressed and Idris fled to Egypt, and then to Morocco where he founded an Ali dynasty and reigned about Ceuta. The dynasty lasted till 985 and reached its greatest extent about 860. Another independent dynasty was that of Aghlabids which was founded by Ibrahim bin Aghlab. The Aghlabids were vigorous rulers who employed large fleets in the Mediterranean, harried the coasts of Italy, France, Corsica and Sardinia and conquered Sicily in 827-28. Sicily remained in Muslim hands until its conquest by the Normans. The Aghlabid domination in Africa, when at its best, witnessed Arab supremacy in the Mediterranean. The Arab Corsairs were the terror of the Mediterranean Sea and besides Sicily, the Arabs took Malta and Sardinia and even invaded the suburbs of Rome. The Aghlabids were succeeded by the Fatimids. During this period the governor of the Yemen followed the example of the Aghlabids in North Africa. While the Tahirids were amputating the Abbasid empire in Khurasan, Muhammad the Ziyadid established his authority at Zabid. The Ziyadis inaugurated the rule of independent dynasties in Arabia though the Caliphs continued to appoint governors at intervals.

36 Stanley Lane-poole, *Mohammedan Dynasties*, pp. 89, 103.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE IMPACT OF MONGOL INVASIONS

*The Mongol Invasion.* Though this is not a political history of Muslim countries, something should be said here of the Mongol invasions. I have thought it necessary to give an account of important political events so that the cultural progress of the period may be studied in its true perspective.

The Seljuk empire was shattered by the Mongols and the Abbasid Caliphate was extinguished. Chenghiz Khan burst from Turkistan into Muslim countries destroying numerous cities with ruthless cruelty. The cruelty of the Mongols is indescribable, and their habits and customs were odious to Muslim feelings. They ate not only things which were prohibited in Islam, but loathsome objects, rats, cats, dogs, etc. They had strong objections to washing, and made it a capital offence to wash hands or garments in running water. In 1219 A. D. when the Mongols burst on Transoxiana, and Utrar fell, the governor was taken alive and put to death by having molten silver poured into his eyes and ears. They were experts in devising tortures. The treachery, irresolution and greed of Allaud-Din Muhammad, king of Khwarism, facilitated the Mongol invasion, while the miserable Abbasid Caliph al Nasir intrigued with the fallen house of Subuktgin and urged its members to rise in revolt against their suzerain. By 1220 A. D., the Mongol hordes were the masters of Bukhara and wherever they went they perpetuated appalling cruelties. Balkh, Nishapur, Merv and other places witnessed terrible scenes in which these savages slew at Merv alone seven hundred thousand, though the author of the *Jahan Gusha* estimates the total number at one million three hundred thousand. He adds that this does not include those whose corpses remained in obscure retreats. At Nishapur the heads of the slain were cut off to prevent any living creature from being overlooked

amongst them, and built into pyramids, the heads of the men, women and children being kept apart. Torture was constantly used to extort information of hidden treasures, and all the works of art in these regions were ruthlessly destroyed. Atta Malik Juwayini says in the *Tarikh-i-Jahan Gusha* that in the lands devastated by the Mongols not one in a thousand escaped. He declares that even should nothing happen thereafter until the resurrection to check the increase of population in Khurasan and Iraq-i-Ajam, the population of these two provinces could never attain the tenth part of what it was before the Mongol invasion.<sup>37</sup>

The Mongols were originally pagans, and Kublai Khan was the first Mongol of the royal house to become Buddhist while Taqudar Khan (1282-84 A. D.) and Ghazan Khan (1295-1304 A. D.) were the first to embrace Islam. The successors of Mongols in Persia became zealous Muslims, and conversion to Islam and final absorption into the conquered people alienated them from their pagan kinsmen. When the Mongols burst into Muslim countries, Islam seemed lost. It was the most critical period in the history of Islam, as it was fiercely attacked on one side by the army of the fanatical crusaders who were fired with religious ardour; and on the other by the wild plundering hordes of the Mongols. It seemed as if the barbarians had become the masters of Asia, but Islam survived these disasters.

*Muslim Revival.* In Syria it steadily supplanted the Franks, while in Persia, where a powerful Mughal dynasty had been established under the name of Il Khan, Islam won a dazzling victory when Ghazan Khan, the seventh ruler, accepted Islam and entered into friendly relations with Muslim princes. The Mongols were conquered not by the sword but by the religious ideals of Islam. Without an inexhaustible reserve of energy, Islam would not have been able to withstand a living faith, pulsating with energy and fired by enthusiasm. Moreover, the Christian crusaders

<sup>37</sup> *Historie des Mongols* by Barond, Ohsson, published in Paris 1834-35. Browne also gives a very lucid account of the Mongol invasion in Chapter I, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. III.

united Islam, and Muslims shook off their lethargy and gathered fresh strength in their heroic struggle against the concentrated strength and fiery ardour of Christian knights. About the time when Ghazan Khan was converted to Islam, the Franks lost Acre, which was their last stronghold in the Holy Land. Sidon and Beyrout fell in 1291 and the Crusades ended in a magnificent triumph for Muslims. The Muslim religion, with its simple dogmas, its calm simplicity of self-sacrifice, its imposing ceremonial, its lofty morality, and its practical character, made a powerful appeal to the Mongol barbarians. The damage done by Mongols was irreparable. Babylonia, the home of Muslim Culture, has remained a desolation since its destruction by the Mongols. Timurlane, though a Muslim, committed atrocities on the same scale. He was as cruel as any Mongol ruler, and the massacres he perpetrated stamp him as one of the greatest tyrants of the world. Countless hordes under Timur burst into the north-eastern provinces and spread themselves over India, Iraq and Asia Minor. At the battle of Angora, the Ottoman army was destroyed, and Sultan Bayazid I was taken prisoner in 1402. After the death of Timur in 1405 the vast empire which he had founded broke up. Of all the Timurid dynasties which established their rule as a result of his conquest, only two survived in modern times : (1) the Khanate of Bukhara which was abolished by the Communists after the Russian Revolution, (2) the great Mughal empire in India. Timur was not a ruler but merely a conqueror. Though a Muslim, he did not hesitate to kill thousands of his co-religionists. At Isphahan he ordered a massacre on November 18, 1387, in which seventy thousand persons perished. As an orthodox Sunni Muslim, he exterminated some heretical sects in Gurgan and Mazandran.

Timur's empire collapsed like a house of cards immediately after his death. Islam was greatly strengthened by the rise of the Osmanli or Ottoman Turks who were a small clan of the Oghuz tribe, and driven westward by the Mongol migration, had taken refuge in Asia Minor early in the thirteenth century. In recognition of their help in the war the Seljuk Sultans allowed them to pasture their flocks in a



province on the borders of the Byzantine Bithynia, with the town of Sugut for their headquarters. Here Osman, the founder of the Osmanli Turks, was born in 1258. Osman pushed the Byzantine frontier back and in 1358 the Turks crossed the Hellespont, established garrison at Gallipoli and began the conquest of the Byzantine Empire in Europe. The victories of Maritza (1364), Kosovo (1389) and Nicopolis (1394), gave the Turks the whole of the Balkan peninsula and only the districts surrounding Constantinople remained unconquered. The capital of the eastern empire was saved by the irruption of Timur into Asia Minor and the defeat and imprisonment of Bayazid I, gave a respite to the Byzantines. The Turks, however, recovered rapidly from their defeat, and Constantinople fell to Muhammad II in 1453, and the Byzantine empire was extinguished. The Crimea was annexed in 1475 and Salim I, the Grim, took Kurdistan from the Persians and Syria, Egypt and Arabia from the Mamlukes, in 1517. He became the master of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and the last Abbasid Caliph of Cairo transferred to him the Caliphate of Islam. Sulaiman the Great overshadowed all his predecessors by his magnificent exploits. Belgrade was conquered; the Hungarians were overwhelmed and their king Louis II, was slain in the historic battle of Mohacs. Hungary remained a Turkish province for a century and a half. Sulaiman besieged Vienna in 1529, and compelled the Archduke Ferdinand to pay him tribute. His admiral Barbarossa, Piale and Dragut created terror along the shores of the Mediterranean and "defeated pope, emperor, and doge together at the great sea fight of Prevesa in 1538."<sup>38</sup> The Empire of Sulaiman stretched from Budapest on the Danube to Aswan on the Cataracts of the Nile, and from the Euphrates almost to the Straits of Gibraltar. The downward course in Turkish history began with the defeat of the Turkish navy by Don John of Austria off Lepanto in 1571. The Turks ceased to be the terror of Europe by that time. The Caliphate was abolished by Turkey in 1922. The services rendered by the Turks to Islam proved essential for the revival of

<sup>38</sup> Stanley Lane-poole, *History of Turkey*, Chapter X.

Muslim power in Asia and Europe, as the Ottoman empire was the most powerful expression of the later Islamic civilization. The Ottoman empire, which in the days of its splendour embraced the whole of farther Asia and a considerable portion of Europe and Africa, revived afresh the glory of the old Caliphate.

It must, however, be added that the Turkish rule was not marked by intellectual or artistic progress. It was essentially a military despotism, and the Turks did not evolve a synthesis of different cultures and races, nor did they distinguish themselves as patrons of arts. Their administration was despotic, though they gave complete religious toleration to Christians and Jews, and allowed them self-government in the management of their communal affairs. The 'Millat' system, which gave autonomy to communities was highly prized by different creeds. Intellectual development too was lacking, as the Turks did not devote sufficient attention to economic development and intellectual growth of their empire. Professor G. W. Gibbs has given specimens of Ottoman poetry in his *History of Ottoman Poetry*. They show the powerful influence which mysticism exercised on the Turks. The influence of Persia, also, was substantial. The Turkish rulers do not seem to have cultivated culture in its widest sense, nor were they able to assimilate the subject races. The corps of Janizaris (*Yani Chari*, 'new soldiery') was organised by Örkhan, the son of Osmañ, the founder of Osmanli Turks. The Janizaries were for several centuries the flower of the conquering army of the Osmanlis. The system was vicious in principle, and it proved a source of constant anxiety not only to the subject races of Turkey but also to the Sultan himself until these praetorian guards were destroyed in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

*The Turks and Islam.* The Turks were probably too busy conquering empires to find time for evolving formative principles of administration. They did not evoke the sympathy and support of subject-races and the Arabs were always discontented with their Turkish rulers. The Turks have also been charged with supineness and indifference to the miserable plight of the Muslims of Granada. The Muslim kingdom in Spain was exposed at that time to imminent

risks, and it is probable that the Turks did not have a sufficiently powerful navy to help Granada in the fifteenth century. Under Sulaiman the Great when the Turkish navy ruled the Mediterranean, effective help should have been given to the Moriscos in Spain. The latter were subjected to atrocious treatment by the Inquisition and their leader besieged their co-religionists in Morocco, Algiers and Turkey to come to their help but the Turks did not stir. If, instead of declaring war against Venice, Turkey had sent an expeditionary force to help the Moriscos, political situation in that country would have undergone rapid transformation. Unfortunately the Turks were too busy with their own affairs to find time for succour to their brethren in Spain. They failed to keep pace with the times, and maintained primitive, feudal conditions in occupied countries long after Europe had revolutionised her social and political structure. She was dominated by the two classes—the army and religious heads, and both these ultra-conservative classes opposed every movement for reform. Her crushing defeats by Austria at the end of the seventeenth century showed that her military and industrial potential was hopelessly backward and needed overhauling. The specimens of Turkish poetry which Professor Gibbs has given in his monumental *History of Ottoman Poetry* show the pervasive influence of a debased form of Sufism on the Turkish mind, and the absence of mental freedom, and scientific outlook on life.

Notwithstanding what has been said above it must be admitted that the Turkish Empire supplied an indispensable element of energy and virility to Islam at a critical stage. The Turkish polity rested on two sustaining pillars: the clergy and the army. The combination of those two powerful forces led to its phenomenal growth and magnificent political development. Yet these two institutions carried within them the germs of decay and retrogression. As soon as political conditions stabilised, the split between the orthodox party and Sufism became acute. In the second place, as the army was invested with dictatorial power, and the administration was practically military in character, it became conscious of its powers, and became illiberal, reactionary

and domineering. The Sultan's bodyguard, the Janizaris, exercised a baneful influence over the whole administration. The state was essentially military in character, and the army clique ruled the state. The army was backed by the clergy, who needed powerful and influential allies. By the destruction of the Janizaris the influence of the army was reduced, but the administrative structure was rotten, yet in spite of its raw primitiveness, as compared with Europe, no reforms were introduced until the twentieth century. It was then too late, and the Caliphate was unable to adjust itself to new changes which were essential for healthy existence. Turkey would have disintegrated two centuries ago, but she survived mainly because the mutual jealousies of the European powers rendered it necessary to maintain her as a buffer state against the rising power of Russia. William Pitt the Younger, was the first to initiate the change in English policy. Turkey survived because her extinction would have created a number of infinitely complicated and delicate problems, and England's jealousy of Russia prevented her destruction as an independent state. From the time of Peter the Great, it has been the ambition of a succession of Russian statesmen to occupy the Dardanelles but they have failed to realise their ambition, and England has opposed with determination Russia's entry into the Mediterranean. Curiously enough, the position was reversed after the Russian Revolution of 1917, when Russia backed Turkey strongly in her traditional policy of closing the Dardanelles against warships of belligerent powers, and England opposed Turkey. Those who wish to study the subject should read Louis Fischer's *Soviet in World Affairs*. The contribution of Turkey to the progress of science and the liberation of mind from the fetters of prejudice, ignorance and fanaticism is comparatively insignificant, and her vast empire, which sprawled through the whole of North Africa, Arabia and the Middle East, was not united by bonds of culture, sympathy, or economic interests. The Turks always remained the ruling race, monopolised all the high offices and treated the Arab races, and Christians, with undisguised contempt. She remained hopelessly backward in technology, and her economic and military potential was primitive; while her political structure was saturated with

feudalism. The economy of the country was monopolised by foreign capitalists who exploited her vast industrial resources, failed to train Turks in technology, and drained her of her raw materials. The system of land tenure remained feudal till the present time, the Turkish peasant, who made an excellent soldier, remained a beast of burden, and the standard of living remained scandalously low. She had a great asset in the sympathy and support of the Islamic world and Muslims throughout the world regarded the Turkish Sultan as the protector of Islam. There is no reason to believe that Turkey realised the intensity of devotion to her cause among Muslims of India.

## CHAPTER X

### MUSLIM SPAIN

At the time of the Muslim conquest of Spain, the Goths were no longer the victorious barbarians who had humbled the pride of Rome, and spread over Europe from the Danube to the Atlantic Ocean. According to Gibbon, their youth had abandoned the exercise of arms; the walls of their cities were moulded into dust; and presumption of their ancient renown would expose them in a field of battle to the first assault of the invaders. Tariq had landed with about five thousand veterans and *Jebel Tariq*, or Gibraltar, commemorates the mountain of Tariq. In the battle of Xeras that decided the fate of Spain, the number of Arabs did not exceed 12,000 soldiers while Roderic the Goth had about 100,000 soldiers though many of them were disloyal to their chief. This point is discussed in scholarly notes by Don Pascual, the learned translator of Al-Makkari's monumental *History of Arabs in Spain*, which was written in the sixteenth century. Roderic was an unworthy successor of Alaric the Goth, as on the historic battlefield he had "on his head a diadem of pearls, encumbered with a flowing robe of golden and silken embroidery, and reclining in a litter or car of ivory drawn by two white mules." The two armies met at the plain of Xeras about two leagues from Cadiz. Tariq's exhortation to his soldiers may be quoted here: "My brethren, the enemy is before you, the sea is behind, whither would you fly? Follow your General. I am resolved either to lose my life or to trample the prostrate king of the Romans." After the defection of some princes and of the archbishop of Toledo, the victory of Tariq was assured and Roderic escaped from a soldier's death to perish ignobly in the waters of the Guadalquivir. His diadems and robes were found on the bank of the river, but the body of the dishonoured king was drowned in the river and was never recovered. The Arabs soon spread over the country like locusts. Cordova was taken by 700 soldiers, while another detachment conquered Granada.



These events occurred in 710-11 A. D. Tariq was just in his treatment of the Spaniards, and gave protection to Christians, while the Jews who had helped their Arab brethren in many towns of Spain, and received them with rejoicing were liberally rewarded. From Toldeo, Tariq swooped down on Castile and Leon, and in an incredibly short time he had performed a victorious march of 700 miles from Gibraltar to the Bay of Biscay and subdued cities, kingdoms and princes. Spain which had stubbornly resisted the Romans for 200 years, was overrun in a few months. Soon after, Musa, Tariq's chief, who had remained behind, and had become exceedingly jealous of his lieutenant's victories landed in Spain with 10,000 warriors, and reduced Seville and Merida with comparative ease. Tariq's phenomenal success showed conclusively that Roderic's administration was rotten to the core. Musa's envy and jealousy could scarcely be repressed and Tariq was imprisoned, reviled, and scourged by the hand of his furious chief. The exploits of Musa were performed in the evening of his life, though, according to Gibbon, he affected to disguise his age, by colouring with a red powder the whiteness of his beard. The Omayyad Caliph of Baghdad had meanwhile heard of Musa's conquest of Spain, and an intrepid messenger of the Caliph entered his camp at Lugo, and in the presence of Spaniards and Arabs arrested the bridle of his horse. He was recalled, and was convicted of vanity and falsehood. A fine of 200,000 pieces of gold was imposed upon the miserable old man. Musa received the treatment which he had meted out to Tariq, and the Arabs did not disguise their joy over the stern chastisement of the envious old man, with his dyed beard and black heart. Musa stood, after a public whipping, a whole day in the sun before the Caliph's palace-gate, till he obtained a decent exile on the pretext of a pilgrimage to Mecca, and expired at Mecca of a broken heart. Tariq, the real conqueror of Spain, was subjected to a species of treatment which was even more humiliating than that meted out to his chief, and he was later on permitted to mingle with a crowd of slaves. The Arabs have sometimes distinguished themselves by crucifying their heroes, and mourning their death after a few centuries. The early Caliphs regarded

wealth as something to be used as a trust, and its possession was to be permanently associated with social obligations. The Muslim conception of society was that of a definite and ordered hierarchy based on fraternity, and deriving its force and vigour from the universal recognition of human wants and human personality. It is true, of course, that in those turbulent times, war remained the great central industry of the country, attracting to itself the most virile elements of the nation, and the camp served alike as a school of army, as well as a training in chivalry. But the strength of Spanish Arabs was derived from the countryside of Morocco in which, for all his love of the Spanish cities, the Moor's affections were centred. Here the Muslim warrior, living in the cultivation of a stormy past, had his strong roots, and sent out its shoots in the administrative life of Andalusia, Seville, Malaga and Toledo. The original conquerors must have been stern, narrow men, with tanned faces which shine in the sun as though they had been carved of old oak, despising sensibility and outward signs of affection, tough and tenacious, the short, solid, strapping lads of brawn and muscle, loving order and discipline, and constituting a new aristocracy of effort, whose title deeds of wealth and power were their brawny arms and iron will. The conquered land was soon parcelled out among different Arab tribes.

### Growth of Art and Culture

The promotion of arts and sciences by Muslim rulers of the period has been acknowledged by European scholars, and the progress made by Arabs in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, literature and the fine arts sheds a peculiar lustre on the enlightened policy of the Muslim rulers. When Muslim power in Spain was declining and disunion and division were undermining the foundations of the state, when all her deities were decayed and broken, the Arabs still worshipped beauty in fine art, in literary form, and in architecture. When the stream of their spiritual and mental energy seemed to have dried up, and a paralysis of will had set in, they still continued to express their genius in architecture. What still remained to Muslim Spain of splendour, wit and fashion, after the fall of Cordova and the prostration

of its wealthiest cities, was concentrated in the sunset blaze of the sumptuous architecture of the Alhambra. It seems as if architecture remained the only elastic medium of expression for cultural ideals of the Arabic race. Cordova and Granada were not only fortresses, but old cities of social and intellectual culture, looking like fresh roses among the streams of meadows, and were famous for their swords, perfumes, colours, flowers, and buildings. They carried on a lucrative trade in ivory, incense, cinnamon and spices. The dubiety of their temper captures, disables, enthrals, confuses and yet enriches, all those who dwelt within their walls. It is, of course, true that in later days, their courage was sapped by division and discord, their will was relaxed and divided, their love was blinded with desire, and religion itself degenerated into superstition; yet in spite of all these drawbacks, the light of learning and love of art, their devotion to those eternal consolations of the human race, the philosophy and science of ancient Greece, which had fallen on their pathway in their progress through Spain, were pursued by them with undiminished energy, as though they had dedicated themselves to the service of a god hitherto unknown in medieval Europe. They gave a new and radiant conception of humanity, and this created a common spiritual and mental atmosphere which was expressed in fine art and literature and in the diffusion of culture. They governed and built magnificent edifices, and prosecuted their researches in science, with the Muslim ideal of learning as a guiding and illuminating principle in view. It must, of course, be admitted that they failed ultimately to realise their political and spiritual ideals. Their internecine strife and the eternal tribal rivalry which has destroyed the unity of the Arab race throughout the world brought about the downfall of their race in Spain. The seeds of their decay had been sown by the colonisation of antagonistic elements and hostile tribes from Damascus, Syria and Egypt in separate parcels and hostile blocks in selected parts of the Spanish Empire. This initial mistake prevented the integration and consolidation of their race in Spain and the whole country was consequently parcelled out into mutually hostile elements which waged perpetual wars with one another. In the last two

centuries of their rule in Spain, we find all the elements of decadence. It was the combined result of their scholarship, which was not mentally creative, and diverted their minds to the form and words of literature; of indolence, which toyed with trifles, instead of thinking and creating thought. The society remained feudal, with the tribes as the motive power and gross social inequalities forced the philosophers and scholars of the country into a crowd of servile yet arrogant beggars. Over the meridian splendour of the Alhambra, we already see these influences floating like vaporous miasma. The factious fights of the Damascene parties were maintained in the province of Seville, while the tribal quarrels of the Moorish Arabs were transplanted in Andalusia and Toledo. The eternal war between the Maadites and the Yemenites ensured the downfall of the Arab race in Spain. The deepest admiration for the work of the Arabs and the sincerest recognition of their services to civilisation, are compatible with a just conviction that the style and character of their government was ill-fitted to ensure their stability. Though they showed a lack of foresight and statesmanship in their mutual relations, one must admit that the development of human energy and intellectual consciousness was stimulated by the best rulers of Muslim Spain without cessation until about a century before their fall, and the cultural element of their rule was destined to remain immortal. The germs of evolution and the mental and physical development of humanity were contained in the cardinal intuition of the early Caliphs. In the days of its splendour, Spain assumed the dignity of systematic speculation in the philosophy of the Cordova school and in the scientific researches of Arab scientists. From this point of view, the Muslims of Spain must be regarded as the protagonists of the universal drama. The first stage of civilisation must be assigned to the Arabs, who were the real inheritors of Greco-Roman culture, and it was partly through them that Italy became the leader of the Renaissance. In the political sphere, however, the Muslims of Spain never really rose above the instincts of clan-ship, and their policy of municipal independence, and tribal freedom was a kind of race suicide. In other countries, tribal and clan rivalries have been strongly transmuted

through feudalism or a highly centralised state, into a national government. But in Spain, tribal jealousies prevented this fusion and the geography of the country accentuated it, and the Arabs paid a terrible price for their lack of organic unity and capacity for assimilating open races. They gave Spain a succession of rulers of whom Christian Spaniards are now no longer ashamed. The new spirit in Spain emphasises the continuity of Spanish culture, and glories in the synthesis of Muslim and Christian elements which achieved the splendour of Cordova. The early wars between the followers of the two religions were a kind of musical exaltation. The youth of the two races regarded it as an earnest of their manhood, which tested their martial prowess, and prepared them for the duties of manhood. To both, this heroic struggle which was carried on for nearly eight centuries, appeared to be a heroic love of adventure, and thousands on both sides chose death for their bride, though some of them were born to the happiest lot ever enjoyed by the ordinary man. In spite of, or, I should rather say, because of this desperate conflict between the two religions, the new Spanish culture is suffused with Moorish culture, and the two are intricately and finely woven as a Beethoven Sonata. This organic union arouses among Spaniards of the present day a feeling of affection to which they cling with the enthusiasm of fanaticism. It needed the alchemy of the present civil war in Spain to fuse the diverse loyalties and enthusiasms to the service of their common motherland. It must have been a glorious day for nearly four centuries and a half to revisit the haunts of their old glories and to behold again, after five hundred years, the splendour of the Alhambra and the glories of Cordova. The rough and enthusiastic followers of the tyrant Franco, who exploited their enthusiasm and the calm simplicity of self-sacrifice for purely selfish ends, gazed with wonder on the serenely domed and concentric vision of baths or aqueducts, against the sombre background of pale pillars, which are both a lovely enigma, and lone remembrances of cities which served the lifetime of culture in the darkest age. Many of these cities were associated with legends, subtle spells and incantations from Baghdad, Samarkand, Damascus, bright heresies of Aver-



roes, and Spanish intensities of love and death. What a contrast between the builders of the Alhambra and their unworthy descendants whose ignorance, superstition, and brutality had the load of five centuries of insult and humiliation on their conscience. Abdul Karim, alone in modern times, seems to have inherited the virtues of his heroic ancestors. To those who saw Franco's Moors, it appeared as if the Arab intellect, having completed its work and discharged its duty to culture departed from this world, to revisit its old haunts in the twentieth century. It blossomed forth into splendour, as long as it maintained the purity of its rugged character intact. When, however, the nerves of discipline relaxed, and Arabs neglected the virile virtues of their ancestors, decline set in rapidly until the race was exterminated in Spain. The loss to Spain was indeed severe and the country has never recovered from that short-sighted policy. Her most industrious and skilful population nourished on the finest tradition of craftsmanship, disappeared, and the country soon fell a prey to the lassitude and stagnation from which it has never recovered. Spain is a land of extremes, and the Spanish character has been precisely the same in all ages. It is the character of a heroic people, who have emerged from the severest crises in the history of their land, by a resistance which has always led to the expulsion of the invaders.

*The Spanish Scene.* A brilliant Spanish writer, Ortega, has given a psychological analysis of the historic provinces of his country in *Invertebrate Spain*. Ortega contrasts the indolent Andalusia with its orchards, its songs, its vegetative existence, and its gay, pleasure-loving people, with the dry, arid Castile where the nerves of man vibrate like harp-strings, and the people develop characteristics of mind and body which distinguish them alike from the Portuguese and the Frenchmen. The Spanish *savant* declares that the Spanish people never passed through the salutary and purifying discipline of feudalism. The Spanish temperament remained undisciplined, and lacking a potent and life-penetrating principle of the social unity, it was destitute of plasticity in affairs of mind or heart. Spaniards retained their heroism,



their love of religion, and their enthusiasm for religious fanaticism. According to this writer it is the lack of the moderating element, which was injected into the European nations by feudalism, which is responsible for the lack of balance and equipoise in Spanish temperament. It is, and has been, the home of extremes of fanaticism, and Spaniards tolerated and even approved of the consolidation of the Inquisition. According to Llorente, author of *History of the Inquisition*, the Inquisition depopulated Spain by extermination and banishment of at least three million industrious subjects during the first 139 years of its existence. It must be said to the credit of the Arabs that they followed a singularly humane and conciliatory policy in their treatment of the Christians, and sternly suppressed attempts at persecution. Throughout their long and chequered period of nearly eight hundred years of rule in Spain, the Arabs aimed consistently at the pacification of the country and complete religious toleration. Their governors, and administrative officers, kings and learned men, created, transmitted and continuously modified their religious policy to suit changed conditions, and breathed fresh life in the fabric of Spain through centuries of organic activity. I should like to quote the following account by Washington Irving of the Spanish countryside. "Many," says Irving, "are apt to picture Spain to their imaginations as a soft southern region decked out with the luxuriant chains of voluminous Italy. On the contrary, though there are exceptions in some of the maritime provinces, yet, for the greater part, it is a stern, melancholy country, with rugged mountains and long sweeping plains, destitute of trees, and indescribably lonesome, and silent, partaking of the savage and solitary character of Africa. What adds to this silence is the absence of singing birds, a natural consequence of want of groves and hedges." In the interior provinces, the traveller occasionally traverses great tracts cultivated with grain as far as the eye can reach, waving at times with verdure, at other times naked and sunburnt. There is something, too, in the simple features of the Spanish landscape that impresses in the soul a feeling of sublimity. The immense plains of La Mancha and the Castile, extending as far as the eye can reach, derive

an interest from their very nakedness and immensity and possess, in some degree, the solemn grandeur of the ocean. Over these countless wastes, the eye catches sight here and there of a straggling herd of cattle attended by a lonely herdsman motionless as a statue. Thus the country, the habits, the very looks of the people, have something of the Arabian character. Granada became the centre of Arab culture and spiritual energy, and it is necessary that this ancient kingdom should claim a few words. It is one of the most mountainous regions of Spain. Vast *sierras* or chains of mountains devoid of leaves or trees mottled with marbles and granites, rise up against a deep-blue sky. "Yet in their rugged bosoms are verdant and fertile valleys, when the garden and desert strive for mastery, and the very look is, as it were, compelled to yield to the fig, the orange, the citron, and to blossom with the myrtle and the rose. In the wild passes of the mountains the sight of the walled towers and villages built like eagle's nests among the cliffs and surrounded by the Moorish battlement, or of round watch-towers perched on lofty peaks, carries the mind back to the chivalrous days of Christian and Moorish warfare. In traversing these lofty *sierras* the traveller is often obliged to alight and lead his horse up and down the steep and jagged ascents, and descents, resembling the broken steps of a staircase."

A great German historian, Wilamowitz, in his discussion on the fallibility of historical reconstruction, stated that "tradition yields us only ruins. The more closely we test and examine them, the more clearly we see how ruinous they are, and out of ruins no whole can be built. Tradition is dead, our task is to revivify life that has passed away. We know that ghosts cannot speak until they have drunk blood, and the spirits which we evoke demand the blood of our hearts. We give it to them gladly, and if they abide our question something from us has entered into them."

We have become so used to that hackneyed phrases, the changeless East, that it is necessary to remind one that the term is wholly misleading, if it is applied to the period 800-1500 A. D. It was the West that was such in barbarism and ignorance during the first half of this period, and the

East that was advancing with gigantic strides. The leadership of the East during this period was assumed by Islam in Asia, as well as in Spain, Sicily and North Africa. It is true, of course, that there was no single Muslim territory under one rule. Islam was not able to unite the enormous territories and form a united nation, nor did it develop the conception of federal coherence. This was impossible for two reasons. In the first place, the enormous area under Muslim rule extending from Bengal to Granada made the ideal of a Pan-Islamic state impossible. Nature proved a serious obstacle to the grand design. In the second place, the racial differences proved an insurmountable barrier. The Negroes of Africa could not coalesce with the Turks or with the Saracens, though the treatment of Negroes was infinitely better under the Arabs than that accorded to this unfortunate race in their homeland at the present day. The ancient Greeks, in spite of their brilliant culture, never enunciated the federal principle favourable to the intellectual growth of Muslim states. Each state had built up its specific tradition of culture and administration, and each was strongly marked by the peculiar complexion of its native tradition and environment. Hence while state rivalry did undoubtedly disturb their internal repose, it sharpened the intellect and strengthened the personality of each of them, and it made them still more determined and self-reliant by driving each state upon its own resources. The rulers knew that all their fortunes, and the maintenance of their dynasty depended upon their qualities as men. An aristocracy of genius and character grew up in Muslim states at a time when the rest of Europe presented but rare specimens of individuals emerging from the common herd. All these despotic rulers were, in many cases, controlled by custom and religion, and by the organised opinion of the aristocracy which they had brought into being, but it will, nevertheless, be true to say that outstanding rulers of Muslim states at this period were greater than their race, and were mental despots, who had absorbed the living energy of their age in themselves. Again it is wholly false to assert that the East has always been static and changeless. It was vibrating with energy for several centuries, both in Europe and Asia. It will be true

to state that Europe was at this time sunk in intellectual sloth, and European society was rude, barbarous and primitive. A serf's life was scarcely better than that of a horse. In Russia, before the present Revolution, there were peasants who saw their uncles exchanged by their masters for greyhounds. The East in those days was leading a vehemently active life, and was laying down the law for the sciences and arts of humanity. While Europe was still in its barbaric state, Muslim philosophers were busy translating the masterpieces of Greek thought into Arabic. From the time when Muslim armies conquered Syria till the time when the Turks were driven from the gates of Vienna, a period of one thousand years, the dominion of Islam showed no signs of decline or disintegration. There was, it is true, recessions in places, such as Spain, and Sicily. By 1000 A. D. Muslims had reached the limit of their rule in Spain. Only the provinces of Spain in the extreme north, such as Leon, Burgos and Navarre had remained unconquered. The rest of Spain was Muslim, and this included the bulk of Portugal. Within the next two centuries, by 1200 A. D. Islam had been driven back to southern Spain. Two centuries later the bulk of Spain had been lost. At the end of the fifteenth century Islam lost her two fortresses, Malaga and Granada. What Islam lost in Spain, she gained in India, and a vigorous empire was built up in the sixteenth century which lasted more than two centuries.

Western culture, like Arab culture, comes from Greece. The Arab culture which injected powerful currents of energy into the apathetic Europe of those days was derived more directly and at an earlier date from the Greek fountain-head. Arabs had started translating Greek classics in Syria through the help of Syrian Christians, and Greek thought was known to the Arabs several centuries before Europe was made aware of it through the Italian Renaissance. There is a gap of nearly five centuries between the Arab Renaissance and the Italian Renaissance, and during this long period of concentrated mental energy, the Arabs gave germinal expression to the profoundest thoughts of Hellas. The Arab translations were conveyed largely through Syrian and Jewish

energy and the Jews represent, according to Dr. Charles Singer (*The Legacy of Israel*) the most continuously civilised element in Europe. In fact the Jewish commentators of Greek thought as presented in Arab garb were to be found in Southern France, Spain and Portugal, as well as in the Rhineland and Sicily. The Jews had settled in Western Europe centuries before many European nations had emerged from Asia and traversed the North Sea to settle in the West. They had preceded the Germans on the Rhine, and have therefore greater claim to the rich soil of the Rhineland than any German race at the present day. Muslim culture saw the emancipation of reason in the Arab race, which has been consistent in the intolerance of control, and in its criticism of accepted canons of conduct. The Muslim, freshly awakened to the sense of Greek thought, was anxious above all things to secure for himself free scope in spheres outside the region of authority. Europe was hitherto bound by authority and was emasculated by feudalism and ecclesiastical despotism. Europe's reply at this time to all attempts to feel the joy of exploration was the Inquisition, with its concomitants, the thumb screws, and other instruments of torture.

It was precisely through this absorption of their genius in the task of revival of Greek culture, that the Muslims conferred the most enduring benefits upon humanity. Again, the Arabic-speaking world acquired an intellectual cohesion and solidarity which was greater even than that of Europe. The learning of the Arabs spread from Baghdad in the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, and in this pious task, ancient Greece played a part which it was destined to play again five centuries later in the Italian Renaissance. In this cultural movement, Syrians, Persians, Jews, and other races took an active part. A number of these scholars were non-Muslims, but they had a largeness of intelligence, quickness of sympathy, a variety of acquirements, and sensitive susceptibility which enabled them to complete their work in an atmosphere of piety and learning. The leaders of this revival had the consciousness of young and potent energy within them. The Muslim Renaissance of the ninth century differed from the Italian Renaissance in the kind of material



selected for transmission. In Italy it was the poets, historians, orators, educationists, and philosophers who were specially studied. The Italian Renaissance had a profound influence on architecture and sculpture. The Muslim Renaissance had a different direction. As all graphic art was forbidden in Islam and Judaism, Saracenic architecture was developed without conscious dependence on classical models. Again, neither the Arabic nor the Hebrew languages were influenced by the Greek literary methods and style. The Arabic language developed into a flexible instrument of thought, and could register the most delicate emotion, no less than the most minute scientific investigation, with almost mechanical precision. The Arab writers, and their Jewish collaborators, concentrated on philosophy and the positive sciences, and achieved a success, which entitles us to regard them as the apostles of humanism for the modern world. The highly perfected individuality of the Arab enabled him to emerge from medieval bondage, as it enabled the Mughals in India to make marble the vehicle of their cultural ideals. Aristotle remains the supreme law-giver in the region of metaphysics, and the Arabs no less than the Christians of the Middle Ages, regarded him as the greatest mind of antiquity. Platonic writings were also admired, though, curiously enough, they assumed Neoplatonic garb in the hands of Muslim mystics. It was, in the sciences of mathematics, astronomy, astrology, geography and medicine of which Europe was then practically ignorant, that Muslim genius expressed its true nature. The Arab genius had that spirit of intelligence, subtle, elastic and penetrating, which was the motive force of the Muslim Renaissance, and this spirit had its powerful effect on the thought of Medieval Europe, which assumed curious form in scholasticism. Scholasticism was the result of contribution which Islam had made to philosophical thought, and the writing of the greatest scholastic of Europe, St. Thomas Aquinas, contain numerous references to Arab philosophers, and to the great Jewish philosopher, Maimonides, who was saturated with the Arab spirit, and was an intimate friend of the philosopher Averroes. Muslim culture left its mark on the greatest mind of medieval Europe. Dante, the poet, expressed his massive



disillusion and fervent hopes for the future in *The Divine Comedy*. He was well-versed in Arab sciences and philosophy, and makes references to the writings of Arab philosophers of the day, such as Avicenna, Averroes and Algazle. A Spanish writer, Miguel Asin Palacios, has shown, in *Islam and The Divine Comedy*, that the fame of the mystical conception of God and the beatific vision in *The Divine Comedy*, as well as the allegory of moral regeneration in the ascent to the heavenly regions, were derived from Arabic writers. Professor Palacios says that Dante was greatly indebted to the writings of Islamic traditionists and particularly to the Spanish Arab, Ibnul Aribi who died in 1240.<sup>39</sup> Dante puts Averroes in the "first circle" of the inferno among the "virtuous pagans." Aristotle and Plato were alive but sleeping, and awaited only the call, first of the Arabs, then of the Italians, to bid them speak with voice intelligible to modern Europe. The arts and philosophy, the positive sciences and the political philosophy of Greece, which suddenly became vital at the time of the Muslim Renaissance, had long remained unknown in a rude, barbaric age, and medieval European scholarship was represented by monks' tales and nun's miracles which would arouse ridicule among children of the present day. It was not their discovery which produced the Arab Renaissance, but it was the intellectual energy and the spontaneous outburst of intelligence, which enabled the Arabs to make use of them. The force generated by Muslim energy a thousand years ago still continues, vital and expansive, in the spirit of modern Europe, of America and young Asia. In the West the human spirit had been buried in the decay of the Roman Empire and the Papacy, while the nations of Europe, bound down by the terrible weight of material necessities, and incapable of doing more than gain and keep a precarious hold upon existence, were suffering from mental prostration. Philosophy had practically disappeared; science was regarded as black magic; systematic thought was nonexistent, and the law of nature was submerged in an ocean of miracles, sorcery and "mysteries which not even a child of five would believe at the present day." Sicily at this period

39 Guillaume, *The Legacy of Israel*.

was the meeting-ground of races, and the Byzantine empire had kept with difficulty an island which was coveted by the hardy races of North Africa no less than by the adventurers from Germany and Normandy. Arab culture, secured a firm footing in Sicily and Naples, and continued to influence the mind and life of Italy long after Muslims had been driven out of the island. In this island, Latins, Greeks and Muslims competed in fierce rivalry. Under the distinguished patronage of the German Emperor, Frederick II (1212-1250), Sicily became the centre of learning and culture. He quarrelled with the Pope, was duly excommunicated, and then he did what no emperor had dared to do before. He elaborately mocked at His Holiness. Frederick spoke six languages, including Arabic, and made a pact with the Sultan of Egypt, regarding the custody of the holy places in Jerusalem, which, with brief interruptions, endured till 1918. He introduced Arabic numerals, but recently brought to Europe, and issued bank notes after the model of Carthage. Frederick's reign was distinguished for its complete tolerance towards all religions, and according to a recent writer, he often praised the serenity of Muslims to fanatical Christians. Superstitious and fatalistic, he inclined somewhat to Islam. It is said that Frederick was not handsome, and an Arab wrote of him, "He would be worth little as a slave."

The Jews had cultivated the Arab language from the time of the Arab conquests, and Arabic became the *lingua franca* of the Muslims all over the world from the eighth century onwards. The Hebrew language was profoundly modified by the Arabic model, in grammar and idiom, which in Jewish circles, it began to displace Hebrew. In fact, the Spanish Jews used it in their daily intercourse till the end of the twelfth century, while for nearly two more centuries it was the language of culture for the Jewish scholars throughout the West. Aristotle remained the master mind of the age, but the Aristotelian writings which were sedulously studied by the Arabs in Spain and elsewhere were in part apocryphal. They, however, possessed translations of the master's works in logic, and knew also the physical and biological works of the philosopher, besides his *Meta-*

*physics* and his treatise on the soul. It is pertinent to note that the Arabs seem to have eschewed his politics. Had the Arabs devoted equal attention to the study of the political philosophy of the Greeks, they might have succeeded in building up a democratic structure for their country. Probably, the time was not suitable for political experiments. The Nestorian Christians of Syria were the earliest teachers of Muslims, and as they knew Syriac, they translated the text of Aristotle and the writings of medical writers such as Galen and Hippocrates, besides numerous mathematical and mechanical works, e.g. of Euclid, Hero and Archimedes. Again Monophysite Christians were students, and sometimes devotees, of Neoplatonic doctrines, and Muslim mysticism has its origin partly in the study of Plotinus, and partly in the creative works of Muslim writers such as Rumi and others. Moreover, Persian Zoroastrians influenced Syriac transmitters, and Jewish thought was no less vigorous in its influence, and gave a new direction to Muslim thought. Arab culture is therefore the product of a number of forces which had a complex origin and the Arab mind showed a singular plasticity in assimilating these ideas. This was due to their belief that the best gifts of intellect had been enjoyed by the nations of antiquity. An ideal of scholarship, and a new pattern of intellectual life, were now revealed to the Arab mind in all their secular attractiveness. The Arab, and later on, the Italian of the Renaissance, developed that conception of communion through knowledge, which had been enjoined on Muslims by their prophet. Knowledge as thus conceived was a manifestation of God in His works and in the soul of man, and is the indestructible religion of science and reason. The Arab, enjoying the pleasure of intellectual freedom and scholarship, touched the Greek spirit with reverence and wonder, and throughout the period of Arab rule, uneasy and imperfect memories of Greece haunted both Arab and Jewish scholars. They had started on the reconquest of the classic world of thought and had succeeded in extorting from nature some of her mysteries. In this process, Jewish and Muslim thought was fused into a unity. The number of works on philosophy and the positive sciences

by the combined energy of Jews and Arabs of Spain is enormous, and it is impossible to discuss this subject here.

Spain is physically akin to Africa, and her southern border in Roman times was not Gibraltar but the Moroccan uplands. Geographically the country is cut up into isolated pockets, and her best rulers have never been able to fuse her different parts into a unity. Just as in the time of Napoleon, so in the time of Augustus, there was no single nerve-centre at which an invader could strike. Augustus had created a province of Lusitania, which is modern Portugal, and added to it Galicia and Asturia. Spain was to Rome what Peru was to Spain herself in the sixteenth century. It was an Eldorado, and was supposed to contain fabulous riches. Southern Spain quickly assimilated Roman culture and civilisation, and Baetica became more Roman than Rome. In the time of the Arab rule, southern Spain again showed its suppleness and flexibility, and for nearly seven hundred years it was the centre of Muslim culture and learning. Spain has shown extraordinary changes in the evolution of her people and the development of her civilisation. Buchan says that under Augustus, "It was the most prosperous epoch in Spanish history, and the life of the country gentlefolk in the settled parts was as pleasant and varied as anything that Italy could show. There was a wonderful breed of horses; necessities and luxuries were alike cheap; the gardens were rich in fruit and flowers, and hills stocked with game, though rabbits were a nuisance to the sportsman." Roman Spain supplied many of the chief figures in imperial literature, Lucan and the two Senecas, Martial, Quentilian, Pomponius Mela and Columella, and some famous emperors—such as Trajan and Hadrian.

After a few centuries Spain relapsed into her old stagnant condition and at the time Arabs invaded the country, she was disunited, and devitalised. Her social structure crumbled to pieces, and all the institutions which the persistence and imagination of Rome had built up with infinite care collapsed like a house of cards. The Saracens took up the task which Rome had started, and developed intellectual and artistic culture of the highest order. Cordova was the magnet which attracted not merely the scholarship of

the world, but also the grace and chivalry, the beauty and the grace of Europe and Asia. Princes and people shared a common impulse to worship the mental superiority of men who had no claim to notice but their genius, and personal merit was the passport which carried the meanest into the most illustrious company. The Arabs regarded the heart as the seat of thought in man, the throne of the will and the centre of intellectual existence, and Cordova was the heart of Muslim culture for centuries. It had the articulate life of an organism, and not the functional differentiation of a machine. It was not merely a city, but also an image of Muslim endeavour and achievement, and it gave characteristic expression to the cardinal tenets of Islam. The history of Spain after the expulsion of the Moors, at the end of the fifteenth century, is as bleak and dreary as is the period of Spanish history in the interval between the decline of Roman influence in Spain and her invasion by the Arabs. When roused to action, she has given evidence of phenomenal energy, and her passionate hatreds have invariably produced diverse currents of national energy, incompatible, irreconcilable, eternal in antagonism as the poles. Again, Spanish society has riven down to its foundations, and rancours dating from her civil wars of the nineteenth century are revived and intensified in the civil war of the present century.

It is impossible for me to deal with the history of the Muslims in Spain, as it is a vast subject, and has been dealt with adequately by numerous historians. I shall content myself with an exceedingly brief sketch of Muslim Spain. Spain was conquered by the Muslims in 710-12 A. D. and was ruled like other provinces of the Caliphate, by governors appointed by the Umayyad Caliph until 755-6. Though most of the members of the Umayyad family had been massacred by the Abbasids, Abdul Rahman a grandson of Hisham, the tenth Umayyad Caliph, managed to escape from Baghdad and after years of wandering he accepted the offer of a powerful section, and was welcomed on his arrival in Spain. Dozy has given a vivid account of his wanderings in Africa.<sup>40</sup> Abdul Rahman landed at

40 Dozy, *Spanish Islam*, pp. 164-67.

Mosara, was saluted as Amir on his arrival, defeated Yusuf, and was acknowledged as the Amir of Spain in July, 756. Had he not arrived in Spain in time, it is possible that the Arab rule in that country would have been overwhelmed by Christians. Spain was in an anarchical state, and the two Arab tribes, were engaged in a deadly conflict which raged over the whole of the country. The Arabs had proved organically unfit to unify their scattered forces, and establish a stable state. The pernicious traditions of tribal jealousies which had been kept up in Arabia were revived with added bitterness in many parts of Spain. Muslim Spain was internally weakened by provincial jealousies and personal rivalries. A strong man was needed to build up a centralised state. Thus began a dynasty which shed lustre on Islamic Spain. Throughout his reign of thirty two-years Abdul Rahman saw his authority disputed by Yemenites and Berbers, and at other times by other tribes who, though often routed, arose in renewed vigour after every defeat. Fortunately for the Amir, the Arab chiefs seemed incapable of combination. In later life Abdul Rahman saw the support of those upon whom he had been able to rely in all emergencies slipping away. Even Badr, who followed him through his adventures, and was greatly responsible for his rise, fell into disgrace. After quarrelling with his most prominent clients, Abdul Rahman finally saw his own family conspiring against him. "Who hath kinsfolk like mine?" cried Abdul Rahman, "When, at the risk of my life, I aimed at a throne I thought as much of them as of myself. When I had gained my end, I invited them hither and shared with them my wealth. And now they would snatch from me the gifts of heaven. Almighty God! Thou hast punished their ingratitude by laying bare to me their machinations: if I have taken their lives, it was to preserve my own and yet, how wretched is my lot. All the members of my house are suspect to me, while they, for their part, fear that I am compassing their destruction. Confidence, mutual outpouring of our hearts, are at an end. What intercourse can there be henceforth between me and my brother, the father of that miserable youth. How can I know peace when he is near I, who by condemning his son to death, has severed the ties



that united us? How can my eyes meet his?" Abdul Rahman's later period was absorbed in 'pondering over the best means of imposing discipline upon the Berbers and the Arabs and imbuing them with habits of order and peace. He and his successors tried to destroy the feudal privileges of the Arab chiefs, and eradicate the mutual jealousies of the Arab tribes in Spain, but they failed to inculcate these attributes among the haughty chiefs. European nations succeeded in building up powerful monarchies in the sixteenth century by taming or destroying the nobility and establishing the supremacy of the crown. The Caliphs of Cordova, however, failed to curb the turbulent spirit of the Arab race, and were obliged to establish an absolute monarchy which was based on the sword. Muslim Spain was never able to achieve a balanced polity, and when the monarchy was weak there was disorder and anarchy throughout Spain; when it was strong, there was no safeguard for personal rights, or provincial privileges. When the centre was weak the provinces constituted so many republics. The chequered history of Islamic Spain illustrates this tendency throughout the period 710-1492.

*Abdul Rahman III.* The successors of Abdul Rahman I, were able to maintain themselves on the throne of Cordova with varying success against the encroachments of the Christians of the North, but the period is full of insurrections of powerful tribes and factions who established independent principalities in different parts of Spain and successfully defied Cordova. The Umayyads of Cordova reigned from 756 to 1031, contented themselves with the titles of Amir and Sultan until Abdul Rahman III adopted that of Caliph in 929 A. D. He was the greatest and the noblest of Muslim rulers in Spain. He not only exercised absolute sway over his subjects and kept the Christian kings of Leon, Castile, and Navarre in check, but warded off danger from Africa, and built up a powerful navy which maintained his authority on the Mediterranean. After his death the only able ruler was Hakam II, whose piety, scholarship and learning made his reign illustrious. After Hakam's death no great Umayyad arose to carry on the work of Abdul

Rahman III. Dozy, in his *Spanish Islam*, gives an admirable account of Abdul Rahman's character and administration, and I propose to follow him in his estimate of this great ruler. According to Dozy, "Of all Omayyad princes who reigned in Spain, Abd-er-Rehman III, was unquestionably the greatest. His achievements approached the miraculous. He had found the country a prey to anarchy and civil war, rent by faction, parcelled out amongst a hundred pretty chiefs of diverse races, exposed to incessant raids by the Christians of the North, and on the point of being absorbed either by the Leonese or the Fatimids of Africa. Despite innumerable obstacles he had saved Andalusia from herself, as well as from foreign domination. He had raised her to a nobler and mightier position than she had ever before attained. He had won for her peace and prosperity at home, and consideration and respect abroad. He found the public treasury in a lamentable state of depletion, he left it overflowing. A third of the national revenue, which amounted in all to 6,245,000 pieces of gold, sufficed for normal expenditure; a third was placed in reserve, and Abd-er-Rahman laid out the rest upon public works. It has been computed that in the year 951 the royal coffers contained the immense sum of twenty million gold pieces, and a traveller, not unversed in finance, assures us that Abd-er-Rahman and the Hamdanid then reigning in Mesopotamia, were the two richest princes of that epoch. The state of the country harmonised with the prosperity of the public treasury. Agriculture, manufactures, commerce, the arts and sciences flourished. The traveller's eyes were gladdened on all sides by well-cultivated fields irrigated upon scientific principles, so that what seemed the most sterile soil was rendered fertile. He was struck, too, by the perfect order which, thanks to a vigilant police, reigned in even the least accessible districts. He marvelled at the cheapness of commodities (the most delicious fruit could be bought for next to nothing), at the prevalent spruceness of attire, and especially at a universal standard of well-being which permitted everyone, with scarcely an exception, to ride a mule instead of journeying on foot. Many different manufactures enriched Cordova, Algeria and other towns. Commerce was so highly developed that, according to the

Report of the Inspector-General of Customs, the import and export duties provided the larger part of the national revenue. Cordova, with its half a million inhabitants, its three thousand mosques, its splendid palaces, its hundred and thirteen thousand houses, its three hundred public baths, and its twenty-eight suburbs, yielded in size and magnificence only to Baghdad, a city, indeed, to which the inhabitants loved to compare it. The fame of Cordova penetrated even distant Germany; the Saxon nun, Hroswitha, famous in the last half of the tenth century for her Latin poems and dramas, called it the Jewel of the World. The rival city which Abd-er-Rahman built was no less admirable. One of his concubines having bequeathed him a large fortune, the monarch wished to devote the money to ransoming prisoners of war, but his agents having ransacked the kingdoms of Leon and Navarre without finding a single prisoner, his favourite wife Zahra said to him 'Devote this money to founding a city, and call it after my name.' The idea took the Khalif's fancy. Like most great princes, he had a passion for building, and in November, 936 A. D., he laid, at about a league to the north of Cordova, the foundations of a town designed to perpetuate the name of Zahra. Nothing was spared to make it as magnificent as possible. For twenty-five years ten thousand workmen, provided with fifteen hundred beasts of burden laboured at its construction, yet it was unfinished at its founder's death. A bounty of four hundred dirhams granted by the Khalif to everyone who took up his abode there, attracted throngs of inhabitants. The royal palace, within which all the marvels of the East and the West vied with one another, was of immense size—as, indeed, is evidenced by the fact that the female inmates of the harem numbered six thousand.

"Abd-er-Rahman's power became truly formidable. A splendid navy enabled him to dispute the mastery of the Mediterranean with the Fatimids, and secured him in the possession of Ceuta, the key of Mauritania. A numerous and well-disciplined army perhaps the finest in those days gave him a marked preponderance over the Christians of the North. The proudest monarchs sought his alliance. The

Byzantine Emperor, the rulers of Germany, Italy, and France, sent embassies to his court.

"Such achievements as these were unquestionably great, but what strikes the student of this brilliant reign with astonishment and admiration is not so much the edifice as the architect—the force of that comprehensive intellect which nothing eluded, and which showed itself a no less admirable master of the minutest details than of the most exalted conceptions. This subtle and sagacious man, who unifies the nation and consolidates its resources, who by his alliances virtually establishes a balance of power, and who in his wide tolerance calls to his councils men of another religion, is a pattern ruler of modern times, rather than a mediæval Khalif."<sup>41</sup>

*Hakam II.* The patronage of scholarship by Caliph Hakam II is well known. The following account of this learned Caliph from Dozy gives us an idea of the enlightened policy of Muslims in Spain. Compare the encouragement of sciences and arts under Hakam II and his successors with the economic and cultural decline of Spain for the last four centuries and a half.

*Education under Caliph Hakam II.* I cannot give a detailed account of the system of education in Muslim countries as this will occupy too much space. However, the following extract from Dozy's *Spanish Islam*, under the Umayyad Caliph Hakam II, who was a generous patron of learning, will show the zeal for culture which the best of the Caliphs displayed.

"Never had so learned a prince reigned in Spain, and although all his predecessors had been men of culture, who loved to enrich their libraries, none of them had sought so eagerly for rare and precious books. At Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus and Alexandria, Hakam had agents who copied, or bought for him—grudging no cost—ancient and modern manuscripts. With these treasures his palace overflowed; on all sides, too, were to be seen copyists, binders, and illuminators.

The catalogue of the Caliph's library occupied forty-four volumes, of which each comprised twenty sheets—or

<sup>41</sup> Dozy, *Spanish Islam*, pp. 445-447.

fifty according to some chroniclers—though they contained only the titles of the works. Some writers assert that the number of volumes amounted to four hundred thousand. All of these volumes Hakam had read, and most of them he had annotated. At the beginning or end of each book he wrote the name, surname, and patronymic of its author, his family and tribe, with the year of his birth and that of his death, and anecdotes relating to him. These notices were precious; no one was more learned in literary history than Hakam, and his annotations were always held authoritative by Andalusian scholars. Books composed in Persia and Syria were often known to him before they had been read by scholars in the East. Learning that an historian of Irak, Abd'l-Faraj al-Isfahari, was engaged on a history of Arab poets and minstrels, he sent him a thousand dinars, with a request that he would transmit to him a copy of his work when completed. Abu-l Faraj, full of gratitude, hastened to comply with his wish. Before publishing his splendid anthology, still the admiration of the learned, he sent the Khalif of Spain a careful copy, together with a poem in his honour, and a work on the genealogy of the Omayyads. He was rewarded by another gift. Hakam's liberality to the learned, whether Spaniards or foreigners, was indeed, boundless, and they accordingly flocked to his court. The monarch encouraged and protected them all—even philosophers, who were at last enabled to devote themselves to their studies without the fear of being massacred by bigots."

*Mass Education in Andalusia.* "All branches of learning flourished under so enlightened a prince. The primary schools were good and numerous. In Andalusia nearly everyone could read and write, while in Christian Europe persons in most exalted positions—unless they belonged to the clergy—remained illiterate. Grammar and rhetoric were also taught in the schools. Hakam, however, believed that instruction was not yet as widely diffused as it ought to be, and in his tender solicitude for the poorer classes, he founded in the capital (Cordova) twenty-seven seminaries, in which children of poor parents were educated gratuitously, the teachers being paid out of the Khalif's privy purse. The University of Cordova was then one of the most renowned

in the world. In the principal Mosque—for it was there that lectures were delivered—Abu Bakr ibn Mu'awiya the Kurashite treated of the traditions relating to the Prophet. Abu 'Ali Al-Kali, of Baghdad, there dictated a large and admirable compilation, containing an immense amount of curious information concerning the ancient Arabs, their proverbs, their languages, and their poetry. This miscellany he afterwards published under the title of *Amaj*; or "Dictations." Grammar was taught by Ibn-al-Kutiyya, who in Al-Kali's opinion was the most erudite grammarian of Spain. The representatives of other sciences were no less renowned. The students attending the lectures were accordingly to be reckoned by thousands. The majority of them were students of what was known as *Fikih*, namely, theology and law for that science was then the gateway to the most lucrative posts."

"In the bosom of this University was nurtured a man whose fame was destined to fill not only Spain but the whole world, and whose marvellous career must now occupy our attention. This man was Ibn Ali Amir, the Great Almanzor who revived the glory of Arab rule in Spain."<sup>42</sup>

*Destruction of Books by Cardinal Ximenes.* It is difficult to estimate the loss which Islamic culture sustained through the destruction of numerous towns in Asia, due partly to the barbarity of the Mongols who ruthlessly destroyed countless libraries, and cities in Khaibar, Bukhara, Persia, Iraq and Syria. Islam has not yet recovered from the appalling loss which it sustained at the hands of Mongols through the extinction of the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258 A. D. The destruction of Arabic books by Christians in Spain was appalling. According to Lea, Cardinal Ximenes burned five thousand books of priceless value, after the conquest of Granada by the Christians in 1492. The following extract illustrates this remark:

"Having once given way to his imperious temper it would seem that Ximenes could no longer control it. Impatient of the slow process of persuasion he imagined that

<sup>42</sup> Dozy, *Spanish Islam*, pp. 454-56.



he could end the matter at a blow, and he refused to listen to those who urged moderation and gentleness. He summoned the Alfaquies to surrender all their religious books; five thousand were brought to him, many splendidly adorned with gold and silver and priceless illuminations. There were numerous applicants for these specimens of Moorish art, but Ximenes refused them all and the whole were publicly burnt, save a few on medicine which he reserved for the library at Alcala. All this foreshadowed still more forcible proceedings. The Moors were becoming more and more disquieted at the increasing disregard of their guarantees and it needed but a spark to cause an explosion."<sup>43</sup>

*Destruction of Philosophical Works by Al-Mansur.* Lea is the greatest authority on the Spanish Inquisition and on medieval tortures, and has written an authoritative book in three volumes of six hundred pages each on the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, and another book of 627 pages on the ordeal and the torture.

Learned books were burned by rulers owing to the fanaticism of the theologians. The following incident from Spain will illustrate this remark. This account is based on Dozy's *Spanish Islam*. Almanzor rightly or wrongly passed as a very lukewarm Muslim. It would not have been prudent to reproach him openly with lax views in the matter of faith, but it was whispered that he loved philosophy and was secretly a keen student of that science. In those days this was a very grave accusation, and he was aware of this. Philosopher or not, he was primarily a statesman and in order to deprive his enemies of the formidable weapon they might wield against him, he resolved to show by a signal act of orthodoxy, what a sound Mussulman he was.

Summoning the most distinguished divines, such as Ibn Dhakwan, and Zubaidi, he conducted them to the great library of Hakam II, and telling them that he had determined to destroy all the treatises on philosophy, astronomy, and other sciences forbidden by religion, he bade them weed out the obnoxious volumes. The divines at once set to work,

and when their task was accomplished the Minister ordered the condemned books to be burned, and to show his zeal for the faith committed some to the flames with his own hands. That this was an act of vandalism few knew better than the enlightened Ibn Abi 'Amir himself, but none the less it produced an excellent effect amongst the Fakihs and the lower orders—the more so because the Minister henceforth posed as the enemy of philosophy and the mainstay of religion. He treated preachers with the utmost respect, loaded them with favours, and listened to their pious harangues, however lengthy, and henceforth on his journeys always took the copy with him.<sup>44</sup>

The last great ruler in his period was the famous minister and general Al-Manzor (Al Mansor), who preserved the unity of the kingdom, and carried on the traditions of the great Abdur Rahman. Mansur preserved the unity of the kingdom, chastised the turbulent nobles, defeated his Christian foes, encouraged learning and scholarship, and restored Muslim power throughout Spain. Let me quote Dozy again for a just estimate of Al-Manzor's policy and character.<sup>45</sup>

"In estimating Almanzor's character we cannot forget that both in the attainment and retention of power he had stooped to actions which morality condemns, and had even committed crimes which we have not attempted to palliate: but justice compels us to add to that so long as his ambitions were not at stake, he was loyal, generous and just. Tenacity of purpose, as we have already indicated, was the cardinal feature of his character. Once he had formed a resolution, he never wavered. By an effort of will he would endure physical pain as impassively as mental anguish. One day, when suffering from some affliction in his foot, he had it cauterised during a session of the Council. Meanwhile he continued placidly to discuss public affairs, and the councillors would have known nothing of the master if the odour of burnt flesh had not revealed the truth. His every action spoke of extraordinary determination and perseverance; he was as steadfast in friendship as in hatred; he never forgot a service nor forgave an injury. These

44 Dozy, *Op. Cit.* p. 490-91.

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 530-533.

characteristics were brought home to the fellow-students to whom in early days, Al-Manzor had offered choice of the posts which they would desire to occupy in the event of his becoming Prime Minister. The three students who upon that occasion had feigned to take his words seriously, duly obtained the offices which they had coveted but the fourth, who had replied with contumely, expiated his imprudence by the loss of his property."

"On the other hand, when Almanzor was conscious of having done an injustice he sometimes succeeded in breaking down his own obstinacy. One day when it was proposed to pardon certain prisoners, as Almanzor glanced at the list, his eye fell upon the name of one of his servants, against whom he had conceived a strong animosity and who for a long time had lain in unmerited durarce." "This man," wrote the Minister on the margin of the list, "shall remain where he is till Hell claims him." But that night he sought repose in vain: his conscience tormented him, and between sleeping and waking he thought he saw a being of hideous aspect and superhuman strength, who said to him: "Set that man at liberty, or pay the penalty of thine injustice." He tried to banish this grim vision from his mind, but without success and at last ordering writing-material to be brought to his bedside, he made out an order for the prisoner's release, appending these words. "To Allah alone this man oweth his liberty; Almanzor grudgeth it."

On another occasion he sat drinking with the vizier Abu'l-Moghira ibn Hazam in one of the superb gardens of Zahira—for in spite of the respect in which he held the Faith, he never refrained from wine, except during the last two years of his life; it was evening, one of those delicious evenings known only in the favoured southern climes. A beautiful singing girl, beloved by Almanzor, but herself enamoured of the minister's guest, chanted these verses:

"The day departs, and already the moon shines half her disc. The setting sun glows like a rosy cheek, and the growing dusk is the down that covers it; the crystal of the goblets is like the icicle, and the wine within is liquid fire. My eyes have made me commit unforgiveable sins. Alas: my

kinsfolk, I love a youth who avoids my affection though he is near me. Ah! that I could throw myself into his arms and clasp him to my heart."

Abu'l-Moghira knew only too well the import of these verses, and he had the imprudence to sing as follows in reply:

"How, alas, can I approach loveliness that is hedged about with swords and spears: Ah! If I were sure in my heart that thy love were sincere, gladly would I risk my life to possess thee? No perils daunt a man of noble heart when he determines to reach the goal."

Almanzor could no longer restrain himself. With a roar of fury he drew his sword, and turning to the songstress cried in a voice of thunder, "Tell the truth. Is it to the vizier that thou addressest thy verses?" "A falsehood might save me," replied the brave girl, "and yet I will not lie. Yes, his glance hath pierced my heart and love made me speak and proclaim what I would fain have kept hidden. I am in thy power, my lord, but thou art gracious, and lovest to pardon a fault confessed." So saying, she wept, Almanzor had already half forgiven her, but turning his wrath to Abu'l-Moghira he assailed him with a torrent of reproaches. The vizier endured them in silence, but when Almanzor had made an end, he replied, "My Lord, I acknowledge that I have committed a grievous fault; but what could I do? Every man is the slave of his destiny; no man can choose his own fate, but must submit; mine has decreed that I should love where I ought not." Almanzor kept silence for a little while. At last he said, "I pardon you both. Abu'l-Moghira, she whom thou lovest is thine, I myself give her to thee."

*Almanzor's Character.* Dozy's estimate of Almanzor's character is summed up in the following words:

"If we find ourselves obliged to condemn the means which Almanzor employed in the pursuit of sovereignty we are also compelled to admit that he made noble use of his power once he had achieved it. If destiny had willed him to be cradled on the steps of a throne the world might perhaps

have found little with which to reproach him in such circumstances; he might, indeed, have figured as one of the greatest princes whose memory history enshtines, but seeing the light, as he did, in a mere provincial manor-house, he was impelled, in order to attain the goal of his ambition, to hew a way for himself through a thousand obstacles; and we cannot but regret that in his efforts to overcome them, he seldom concerned himself about the legitimacy of his methods. He was in many respects a great man, and yet, even without judging him too strictly, we find it impossible to love, and difficult even to admire him." His treatment of the Caliph was atrocious, and he treated his patrons with gross ingratitude. Mushafy was subjected to abominable treatment, and he destroyed any person who came across his power. He inspired terror in Christians. Once he penetrated a hostile region through a narrow defile between two lofty mountains; and although his troops ravaged and pillaged in all directions the Christians did not venture to resist them. Upon retracing his steps however, Almanzor found the pass occupied by the enemy. After negotiations the Christians ultimately agreed to allow Almanzor to depart with his booty, and their dread of him was such that they even undertook to provide him with beasts of burden to carry it, to supply him with provisions as far as the frontiers and to remove the corpses which obstructed the route of his army. Upon another occasion a standard-bearer during a retrograde movement forgot his standard and left it planted in the ground on the summit of a hill overlooking the Christian town. There the flag flew for many days, during which the Christians did not venture to ascertain whether the Muslims held the position or not. The epitaph composed by a Christian monk and preserved in his chronicle is illuminating. "Almarzor," wrote the monk, in the *Chronicon Burgense*, "died in 1002: he was buried in Hell." These simple words, wrung from the hatred and anguish of a defeated foe, are more eloquent than the most pompous panegyric."

*Decline of Muslim Spain.* After the death of Almanzor, the Muslim state in Spain broke up into fragments and Moo-

rish Spain became a prey to factions and adventurers. A number of petty dynasties arose who are known in Spanish history as the *Ryes de Taifes* or Party Kings. The petty tyrants were independent of Cordova and the anarchy in Spain gave a good opportunity to the Christians of the north, to consolidate their power. The most important of these dynasties was the cultured house of the Abbasids of Seville whose founder was the famous Qazi of Seville. They were the leaders of Spanish Moors against the encroachments of Christians. In the middle of the eleventh century the success of the Christians in Spain, the energy of Pisans in recovering the islands of Corsica and Sardinia, and the conquests of the Normans in Italy had humbled the power of Muslims in the Mediterranean. Only the Fatimids of Egypt maintained the renown of the Saracens, and all other Muslim kingdoms had decayed. This was therefore a time for a Muslim revival. A prophet appeared among the Berbers, among the tribe of Lamtuna in the person of Abd-ullah bin Tashfin. This man preached a holy war for the glory of Islam and the Berbers followed him enthusiastically. His adherents called themselves *Al-murabitin*, which literally means 'pickets who have hobbled their horses on the enemies' frontiers'. The Spaniards corrupted the name into Almoravids and the French *marabout* or devotee. The Almoravids acknowledged the Abbasid Caliph as their chief. They founded the city of Morocco (Marrakush) and in the course of the next fifteen years they conquered Ceuta Tangier, and west of Morocco.<sup>46</sup> In 1086 Yusuf bin Tashfin, whose remarkable qualities as a general and statesman had secured him the enthusiastic admiration of his people, was entreated by the Abbasids of Spain as well as by rulers of other small kingdoms to come to Spain and help them against the assaults of Alfonso VI, Sancho of Aragon and the renowned Cid Campeador. Yusuf came to the rescue of Muslim Spain and destroyed the army of Castile at the battle of Zallaka, near Badajoz, on October 23, 1086. He did not stay in the country as he was wanted in Morocco. After leaving three thousand men with Berbers, to support the Arabs he returned to Africa. He was again beseeched by the king of Seville and others to help him



against the Christians and this time Yusuf annexed the whole of Moorish Spain, with the exception of Toledo which the Christians retained, and Zarogosa, where the Hudids were allowed to subsist. The rude and uncouth Berbers were soon enervated by the soft climate and decadent culture of the South, and were not able to resist the steady advance of Christians. The Almorovide dynasty had lasted less than a century when the fanatical *Almohades* swept over the whole of North Africa and southern Spain, and left no rival house standing.<sup>47</sup>

The Almoravides ruled from 1056 to 1147 A. D. They were succeeded by the Muwahhids, who are called Almohades in Spanish. They were Unitarians and their doctrine was a protest against the realistic anthropomorphism of orthodox Islam.<sup>48</sup> Their Prophet Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Tumart, a Berber of the Masmuda tribe preached the doctrine of unity of God (*Tawhid*) and took the title of the Mahdi in the beginning of the 12th century. He died in 1128 and was succeeded by his friend Abd-al-Momin. Momin began his rule in 1130 and his long career of conquest began in 1140. He destroyed the army of the Almoravides in 1144, and after capturing Oran, Fez, and Ceuta in the next two years, he took Morocco in 1146, and thereby extinguished the Almoravide dynasty. He had sent an army to Spain in 1145, and by 1150 the whole of Moorish Spain had been brought under his sway. He extended his conquests eastwards, and by conquering Algeria in 1152, Tunis in 1158, and Tripoli, he controlled the whole coast from the frontier of Egypt to the Atlantic as well as Moorish Spain. Momin died in 1163 but his successors lacked his energy and ability. The Almohades suffered a disastrous defeat at Las Nawas in 1235 and Moorish Spain never recovered from this blow. The Almohades were expelled from the peninsula after this disaster, and Christians of Spain who were united by leadership and fanaticism and had become aggressive and militant, consolidated their power and reduced to subjection all Muslim principalities in

47 S. Lane-poole, p. 43.

48 *Ibid*, pp. 45-47.

Spain except the Nasrids of Granada. The Nasrid dynasty offered stubborn resistance to the advance of Christians in the South, and its gallant rulers held out till the conquest of Granada in 1492, when the whole of Spain came under the sovereignty of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic. The loss of Spain by the Almorades was followed by disasters in Africa. Saladin had conquered Tripoli in 1172; and the Governors in Tunis and Algeria declared their independence and founded their dynasties. Finally, the chiefs of the mountain tribe of the Narimids extinguished the dynasty of the Almohades by conquering their capital in Morocco in 1269.

Small principalities had been established at Valencia and Murcia during the decline of the Almohades' power but the only principality that was able to keep up prolonged resistance to Christian power was that of the Nasrid or Bansu-Nasr of Granada. The Nasrids were the greatest patrons of art and culture in the later history of Muslim Spain, and their cultivated court and magnificent palace, the Alhambra, maintained the finest tradition of Muslim culture and revived the splendour of the great Caliph Abdur Rahman III. The last ruler of the dynasty was the unfortunate Mohammed XII (Boabdil) who ended his days in exile. I will quote here the passage from Washington Irving from the *Conquest of Granada* which gives a vivid account of the final act in this tragedy. The following account of the siege of Granada is based on this classical work:

"How is thy strength departed, Oh, Granada: how is thy beauty withered and despoiled, oh, city of groves and fountains; the commerce, that once thronged thy streets, is at an end; the merchant no longer hastens to thy gates, with the luxuries of foreign lands. The cities, which once paid thee tribute, are wrested from thy sway; the chivalry, which filled thy vivarambla with the sumptuous pageantry of war, have fallen in many battles. The Alhambra still rears its ruddy towers from the midst of groves but melancholy reigns in its marble halls, and the monarch looks down from his lofty balconies upon a naked waste, where once had extended the blooming glories of the Vega."

Such is the lament of the Moorish writers over the lamentable state of Granada, which had become a mere ghost of its former self. The two ravages of the Vega, following so closely upon each other, had swept off all the produce of the year, and the husbandman had no longer the heart to till the field seeing that the ripening harvest only brought the spoiler to his door.

*Fall of Granada.* During the winter season, King Ferdinand made diligent preparations for the last campaign that was to decide the fate of Granada. As this war was waged purely for the promotion of the Christian faith, he thought it meet that its enemies should bear the expenses. He levied, therefore, a general contribution upon all the Jews throughout his kingdom, by synagogues and districts, and obliged them to render the proceeds to the city of Seville.

On the 11th of April, Ferdinand and Isabella departed for the Moorish frontier, with the solemn determination to lay close siege to Granada, and never to quit its walls until they had planted the standard of the faith on the towers of the Alhambra. Many of the nobles of the kingdom, particularly those from the parts remote from the scene of action, wearied by the toils of war, and foreseeing that this would be a tedious siege, requiring patience and vigilance, rather than hardy deeds of arms, were contented with sending their vassals, while they stayed at home themselves to attend to their domains. Many cities furnished soldiers at their cost, and the king took the field with an army of forty thousand infantry, and ten thousand horse. The principal captains, who followed him in this campaign, were Roderigo Ponce de Leon, the Marquis of Cadiz, the master of Santiago, the Marquis of Villera, the Counts of Tendilla, Cifuentes, Cabra and Urcia, and Don Alonzo de Aguilar.

Queen Isabella, accompanied by her son, the prince Juan and by the princesses Juana, Maria, and Catharina her daughters, proceeded to Alcala la Real, the mountain fortress and stronghold of the Count de Tendila. Here she remained to forward supplies to the army, and to be ready to repair to the camp whenever her presence might be required.

The army of Ferdinand poured into the Vega, by various defiles of the mountains, and on the 23rd of April the royal tent was pitched at a village called Los Ojos de Huscar, about a league and a half from Granada. At the approach of this formidable force, the harassed inhabitants turned pale, and even many of the warriors trembled, for they felt that the last desperate struggle was at hand.

Boabdil el Chico assembled his council in the Alhambra, from the windows of which they could behold the Christian squadrons, glistening through clouds of dust, as they poured along the Vega. The utmost confusion and consternation reigned in the council. Many of the members, terrified with the horrors impending over their families, advised Boabdil to throw himself upon the generosity of the Christian monarch; even several of the bravest suggested the possibility of obtaining honourable terms.

The Wazir of the city, Abul Casim Abdelmelic, was called upon to report the state of the public means, for sustenance and defence. There were sufficient provisions, he said, for a few months' supply, independent of what might exist in the possession of merchants, and other rich inhabitants. "But of what avail," said he, "is a temporary provision against the sieges of the Castilian monarch, which are interminable?"

He produced also the lists of men capable of bearing arms. "The number," said he, "is great but what can be expected from mere citizen soldiers? They vaunt and menace in time of safety. None are so arrogant when the enemy is at a distance but when the din of war thunders at their gates, they hide themselves in terror."

When Musa heard these words, he rose with generous warmth. "What reason have we," said he, "to despair? The blood of those illustrious Moors, the ancient conquerors of Spain, still flows in our veins. Let us be true to ourselves, and fortune will again be with us. We have a veteran force, both horse and foot, the flower of our chivalry seasoned in war, and scarred in a thousand battles. As to the multitude of citizens, spoken of so slightly, why should we doubt their

valour? There are twenty thousand young men, in the fire of youth, for whom I will engage, that, in the defence of their homes, they will rival the most hardy veterans. Do we want provisions? Our horses are fleet, and our horsemen daring in foray. Let them scour and scourge the country of those apostate Moslems, who have surrendered to the Christians. Let them make inroads into the lands of our enemies. We shall soon see them returning with cavalcades to our gates and to a soldier, there is no morsel so sweet as that wrested with hard fighting from the foe."

*Boabdil.* Boabdil el Chico, though he wanted firm and durable courage, was readily excited to sudden emotions of bravery. He caught a glow of resolution from the noble ardour of Musa. "Do what is needful," said he to his commanders "into your hands, I confide the common safety. You are the protectors of the kingdom and with the aid of Allah, will revenge the insults of our religion, the deaths of our friends and relations, and the sorrows and sufferings heaped upon our land."

To everyone was now assigned his separate duty. The wazir had charge of the arms and provisions, and the enrolling of the people. Musa was to command the cavalry, to defend the gates, and to take the lead in all sallies and skirmishes. Naim Reduan and Mohammed Aben Zayda were his adjutants; Abdel Kerim Zegri, and the other captains, were to guard the walls; and the alcaides of the alcazaba, and of the red towers, and command of the fortresses.

Nothing now was heard but the din of arms, and the bustle of preparation. The Moorish spirit, quick to catch fire, was immediately in a flame and the populace, in the excitement of the moment, set at naught the power of the Christians. Musa was in all parts of the city, infusing his own generous zeal into the bosoms of the soldiery. The young cavaliers rallied round him as their model; the veteran warriors regarded him with a soldier's admiration; the vulgar throng followed him with shouts; and the helpless part of the inhabitants, the old men and the women, hailed him with blessings as their protector.

On the first appearance of the Christian army, the principal gates of the city had been closed, and secured with bars, and bolts, and heavy chains. Musa now ordered them to be thrown open. "To me and my cavaliers," said he, "is entrusted the defence of the gates; our bodies shall be their barriers." He stationed at each gate a strong guard, chosen from his bravest men. His horsemen were always completely armed, and ready to mount at a moment's warning. Their steeds stood saddled and caparisoned in the stables, with a lance and buckler beside them. On the least approach of the enemy, a squadron of horse gathered within the gate, ready to dart forth like the bolt from the thunder cloud. Musa made no empty bravado, or haughty threat; he was more terrible in deeds than in words and executed daring exploits, beyond even the vaunt of the vainglorious. Such was the present champion of the Moors.

Had they possessed many such warriors, or had Musa risen to power at an earlier period of the war, the fate of Granada might have been deferred, and the Moor, for a long time, have maintained his throne within the walls of the Alhambra.<sup>49</sup>

After the surrender of Granada, at two leagues' distance, when Moorish cavaliers departed from Granada they gazed with silent agony of tenderness upon their delicious abode, which had been the scene of their loves and pleasures. While they were gazing at it, a light cloud of smoke burst forth from the citadel, and presently a peal of artillery told the unhappy king that the city was taken possession of and the throne of the kings was lost for ever. Poor Boabdil, who had been softened by misfortunes could restrain himself no longer, and said, "Allah-O-Akbar." He tried to recover his self-possession but found it impossible, and burst into a flood of tears. His mother, who was a woman of fiery spirit, was indignant at the exhibition of weakness. "You do, well," she said to her son, "to weep like a woman, for what you failed to defend like a man. It would have been well for poor Boabdil if he had died fighting gallantly to the last for the throne of his ancestors,

<sup>49</sup> of Washington Irving, *Works*, Bohn's Edition, published in 1900, pp. 313-16.



and the defence of Islam, as Tipu Sultan did and a number of other heroes have done since. But he had all the vices, and none of the virtues of his race, and the Arabs whom he was supposed to lead could not unite even at a time when Christian troops were besieging Granada.

The unfortunate Boabdil had made a request to Ferdinand that no person might be permitted to enter or depart by the gate of the Alhambra through which he had sallied, forth to surrender his capital. "His request was granted, the portal was closed up, and has remained closed to the present day, a mute memorial to that sad event."

## CHAPTER X

# MUSLIM PHILOSOPHY—RISE OF RATIONALISM IN ISLAM

Having dealt with the political history of Muslim kingdoms let me now give a very brief account of the philosophy and culture of the period. The treatment must necessarily be brief and I shall only deal with the most important features of the cultural and philosophical movements of the Caliphate. Steiner in his monograph on the Mutazilites remarks that the leading idea of the Mutazilas is best characterised as the enduring protest of sound human understanding against the tyrannical demands which the orthodox teaching imposed upon it. "They called themselves *Ab lu'l-Adl wa't-Tawhid* or "Partisans of Divine Justice and Divine Unity." In their opinion the orthodox doctrine of predestination, which represented God as punishing man for sins forced upon him by a Fate which he had no power to resist, made God in effect a pitiless tyrant. Von Kremer thinks that their doctrines were developed at Damascus under the influence of Byzantine theologians notably John of Damascus and his disciple, Theodorus Abu Cara. The close agreement of Murjiite and Qadarite doctrines with those formulated and defended by John of Damascus and by the Greek Church generally is significant. Both John of Damascus and his pupil, Abu Cara, who died in 826 A. D. wrote controversial works upon Islam in the form of discussions between Muslims and Christians. It is probable that the doctrine of free-will was already taught in Damascus in the seventh century. We are told that Hisham-b-Abdul Malik put to death Ghaylan the Qadirite for teaching the doctrine of free-will. Yazid II is said to have embraced the views of the Qadrites. The Shi'ite and the Qadri tenets had a close resemblance, while some of the Shi'ite doctrines current at the present time in many respects resembled Mutazilite doctrines. There were other influences also which

gave an impetus to the Mutazila doctrines. Persian ideas and Persian religion began to influence the Arabs, and after the supremacy of the Abbasids and increasing Persian influence, free thought became a fashion in certain selected circles. Philosophy and science were studied with enthusiasm by all sections of the intelligentsia. Greek philosophy, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, the old heathen beliefs of Harran, Judaism, Christianity, all were studied with great interest at a time when the liberal policy of the earlier Abbasids gave free scope to intellect. The Abbasids encouraged these efforts so long as they were confined to intellectual and literary activity, fostered scientific researches, organised on a systematic basis translations from Syriac and Greek languages, and were the leaders of the Renaissance.

There were other religious sects, etc. which were denounced by Muslim writers, and in 167 Caliph Mahdi, who was more strict than his father Al-Mansur, appointed an inquisitor to extirpate heresy. Noeldke is of the opinion that Caliph Al-Mansur was the ablest of all the Abbasid Caliphs. He believed firmly in and acted upon the principles of religious toleration, and this had most beneficial effects on the mental life of the empire. Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and the Heathens of Harran co-operated actively in the supremely important task of interpreting Greek science and culture to the Arabs. The mental food upon which the Arabs were nourished came from different sections and races of Asia. The heathen Syrian source which had its centre at Harran played an important part in the propagation of Greek culture, though the information at our disposal is limited. Another important source from which the knowledge of Greek culture was derived was the numerous Syrian Christian monasteries which were studded over the country.

A third important influence must be mentioned here. Persia played a most important part in the cultural synthesis, as Persian Kings were great patrons of arts and sciences. In the fifth century A. D. an academy of medicine and philosophy had been founded at Gondeshapur in Khu-

zistan. One of the directors of this institution was summoned, in 148, to prescribe for Al-Mansur, and from that time the academy furnished a succession of Court physicians to the Abbasids. Muslims regarded the new culture as a solvent through philosophical speculation, and Aristotle and Plato, Euclid and Ptolemy, Galen and Hippocrates produced a profound influence on Muslim life and thought.

*Splendour of the Abbasid Caliphate.* The first hundred years of the Abbasid Caliphate were the golden years of Muslim culture, and the period witnessed phenomenal progress of the empire. The decline of the Abbasids was reflected in stagnation, and mental freedom was impaired. Though individual rulers continued to foster learning, and scholars carried on their peaceful pursuits without difficulty, the leadership, and encouragement of learning as an important part of imperial policy, were lacking after the death of Al-Watig in 842-847 A. D. When Mutawakkil became Caliph, scholasticism was established in comfortable places of emoluments, with its stereotyped methods, barren classifications and subtle distinctions; was incorporated in the philosophical doctrine of the dominant creed. The brain busied itself with its own workings and wholly neglected the study of nature and man took refuge in vague and futile doctrines, instead of conquering the forces of nature and harnessing them to the needs of man. Nature established its supremacy over man's reason, and the spirit of scientific investigation was replaced by credulity and superstition. Had man's mind been turned to the scientific study of the phenomena of nature, and the positive spirit of free inquiry applied to the solution of social problems, the entire history would have been different. Instead of dealing with facts and basing itself on ascertained knowledge, it busied itself with purely verbal distinctions which led nowhere. Those who loved free inquiry and advocated mental freedom found themselves ostracised. The slightest deviation from fixed prejudices was punished with a severity which is inconceivable today. Philosophy was under a cloud, and many brilliant men, obstructed in their path, took refuge in mysticism. The great champion of Mutazilites, Caliph Al-

Mamun must also share the blame for the reaction which set in against their doctrines. He committed a fatal mistake by using the organised power of the state to regiment and control the intellectual and religious life of his people. Al-Mamun's blunder strengthened the orthodox party who now posed as martyrs, and the ignorant mob, with its febrile passions and violent prejudices, took up the cause of the oppressed, and the persecuted leaders became the leaders of the people. Al-Mamun's predecessors had acted with great sagacity and vision. Al-Mansur, who was one of the ablest founders of the Caliphate had acted differently. Instead of forcing a doctrine on a people that was unprepared for it, he adopted gentle methods and by persuasion and cajolery he managed to bring the people round to his views. Being an experienced man he was very cautious and circumspect in dealing with matters of mind, belief and dogma. Al-Mamun, on the other hand, acted more like a pedagogue and severely punished those who had the temerity to oppose his new-fangled doctrines. Like our Emperor Akbar, he loved to discuss theology, hold religious discussions with professors of different religions and make comprehensive provision for the systematic translation of Syriac and Greek writings into Arabic. Bish-al-Marisi, who had remained in hiding in Harun-al-Rashid's time on account of his heterodoxy, discoursed in 209 before Al-Mamun on the nature of the *Quran*. Under Al-Mamun's patronage libraries, laboratories, and observatories were established at Baghdad.

*The Mutazilites.* At last, he took the final and fatal step. In 202 a decree appeared proclaiming the doctrine of creation of the *Quran* as the only truth, and as binding upon all Muslims. At the same time to win the favour of a powerful section and propitiate Persian nationalists and the Alids, Ali was proclaimed the best of creatures after Muhammad. The Alids, it should be remembered, had close points of contact in the Mutazilites. The promulgation of a decree defining a basic dogma on the part of a reigning Caliph was a revolutionary act; never before had individual conscience been threatened by directive from the throne. It made the

Mutazilite creed virtually a State Church under Erastian control. This was, however, inconsistent with the tradition of Islam, as it never granted to the Imam, or any leader of the Muslim people, any position but that of a protector and representative. Its theology could only be interpreted and amplified in the same way as its law, in other words, by the agreement of the whole community. A decree issued in the autocratic manner characteristic of the Caliph was bound to exasperate the orthodox clergy and the masses of the Arab people. Al-Mamun's proclamation did not change the beliefs of the people overnight. The old doctrines survived, and the people went on as before, clinging tenaciously to the fixed habits of their heart and mind, and ignoring with supreme disdain the fanatical outpouring of a partisan Caliph. The Caliph noted the indifference and apathy of the people for six years, and then a method was devised of bringing the will of Al-Mamun home upon the people. In 217 a distinguished Mutazilite, Ahmad ibn Abi Duwad, was appointed chief Qazi, and in 218, the decree was renewed. But this time it was accompanied by what may be regarded as a test act, and an inquisition (*mihna*) was instituted. The letter of directions for the conduct of this matter, written by Al-Mamun to his lieutenant at Baghdad, is decisive as to the character of the man and the nature of the movement. It is full of railings against the common people who know not the law and are accursed. They are too stupid to understand philosophy or argument. It is the duty of the Khalifa to guide them and especially to show them the distinction between God and His book. He who holds otherwise than Khalifa is either too blind or too lying and deceitful to be trusted in any other thing. Therefore, the Qazis must be tested as to their views. If they hold that the *Quran* is uncreated, they have abandoned *tawhid*, the doctrine of God's Unity, and can no longer hold office in a Muslim land. Also, the Qazis must apply the same test to witnesses in all cases before them. If the latter do not hold that the *Quran* is created, their evidence is worthless, and they cannot be witnesses. Other letters followed; the *mihna* was extended throughout the Abbasid empire and applied to other doctrines, e.g. that of free-will and of the vision of God. The



Caliph also commanded that the death penalty for unbelief (*kufr*) should be inflicted on those who refused to take the test. They were to be regarded as idolators and polytheists. The death of Al-Mamun in the same year averted a conflict between the people and the Government. It is true that the *mihna* was continued by his successor, Al-Mutasim, and by his successor, Al-Wathig but neither of them showed excessive zeal in its enforcement, and both of them used it as a convenient political weapon. The Caliphate of Al-Mutawakkil inaugurated a violent departure from the traditions of Al-Mamun. Mutawakkil repealed Al-Mamun's proclamation, in the second year of his reign in 234 and the *Quran* was declared uncreated. Mutawakkil was not only a rabid anti-Mutazilite he was an equally rabid anti-Alid and anti-Christian, and this man, who incarnated narrow and blind fanaticism, has been hailed as a great Caliph solely because he repeated Al-Mamun's notorious proclamation. His gross incompetence as a ruler has been forgotten by fanatics in their fury against Mamun's indiscreet and unwise proclamation. Mutawakkil's administration of the Caliphate stamps him as one of the worst Caliphs. The Caliph signalised his reign by senseless persecution of the Alids, and all Persian nationalists came under a ban. Practically, *the status quo ante* was restored and Mutazilism was again left a struggling heresy.

*Ahmad Ibn Hanbal.* In this long conflict, the most prominent figure was certainly that of Ahmad ibn Hanbal the founder of one of the great schools of Muslim law. He was the trust and strength of the orthodox, and the people admired the manner in which he bore contumely, imprisonment and scourging, and defeated the designs of the Mutazilites. I am indebted to a number of works on Muslim theology for my study of this subject. I would specially like to mention Duncan B. Macdonald's *Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory*, which has been most useful to me for the whole of this section.

The Mutazila school having enriched its stores of argument and methods of dialectic by the study of Greek

philosophy, and reinforced by its internal strength and the patronage of Al-Mamun and his son Al-Wathiq, threatened to extinguish the orthodox party against whom it waged a desperate war. The Mutazila attacked the orthodox doctrine that the *Quran* was uncreated in the bitterest terms. Al-Mamun in the last years of his Caliphate had compelled seven eminent men to declare their adhesion to the Mutazila doctrine. He also wrote a long letter to Ishaq bin Ibrahim instructing him to examine theologians whom he suspected of holding the prohibited belief. He went further and ordered such persons as refused to declare *Quran* to be created, to be punished. About two dozen learned Muslims, who were greatly esteemed, were brought before the tribunal and by threats and imprisonment most of them were obliged to subscribe to the Mutazila belief. The only prominent person who refused was the great Ahmad bin Hanbal. It is probable that he would have been executed but for the sudden death of Al-Mamun.

Tabari gives a detailed account of this controversy. Caliph Al-Wathiq followed in his father's footsteps, and produced thereby a formidable conspiracy by Ahmad bin Nasr al-Khuzary, which was revealed by the betrayal of some of the conspirators.

Both Tabari and Dozy inform us that in exchange of prisoners which took place in A. H. 231 (845-46 A. D.) Al-Wathiq subjected each prisoner to searching inquiry into the belief in the creation of the *Quran*. The fanatical Caliph refused to receive such captives as declared their belief that the *Quran* was uncreate, and these unfortunate men were sent back to captivity. They were also called upon to deny that God on the Last Day would be visible to men's eyes. The orthodox believe in the letter of God's word; they also hold that the *Quran* was uncreate, and are convinced that God would be visible to men's eyes on the Judgment Day. The Mutazilites sincerely believed that Fatalism would destroy initiative and progress, and impair self-reliance and self-control. It cannot be denied that the systematic formulation of the orthodox creed, the triumph of Al-Ashari and the supremacy of scholasticism in Europe and Asia,

obstructed the growth of mental freedom and retarded progressive movements in many eastern countries. Mental freedom was impossible at a time when the Baghdad mob of religious fanatics would resort to direct action, and club to death anyone who was suspected of heresy. In times of disorder and confusion, when mental freedom is denied, men take refuge in emotions, intellect is regarded as an unsafe guide, and scholasticism assumes fantastic forms and shapes. Imam Ghazali's profound learning proved successful in incorporating mysticism into Islam, and henceforth Sufism was not only tolerated but encouraged by Muslim rulers. Dozy has given a brief summary of the later development of the Mutazilite doctrine in his *History of Islamism*, which I reproduce below.

### Dozy's Estimate of the Mutazilite Doctrine

"This doctrine was subsequently remodelled and propagated under the influence of the philosophy of Aristotle. The sect, as was in the nature of things, subdivided. All the Mu'tazilites, however, agreed on certain points. They denied the existence of the Attributes in God, and contested every thing which could prejudice the dogma of the Divine Unity. To remove from God all idea of injustice, they recognised men's entire freedom of action. They taught that all the truths necessary for salvation belong to the domain of reason, and that they may be acquired solely by the light of reason, no less before than after Revelation, in such wise that men, at all times and in all places, ought to possess these truths. But to these primary propositions the different sects added others peculiar to themselves. Most of them have treated theology with much profundity; others, on the contrary, became involved in hair-splitting or even diverged widely from the spirit of Islam. Some there were, for example, who believed in Metempsychosis, and who imagined that the animals of each species form a community which has as a prophet an animal like unto themselves; strange to say they based this last doctrine on two verses of the *Quran*. And there were many other follies of the same kind. But it would be unjust to render all the Mutazilites responsible for errors of some, and, when all is said and done, they

deserve to be spoken of with respect. In meditating on what religion bade them believe, they became the rationalists of Islam. Thus it came about that one of their principal affirmations was that the *Quran* was really created, although the Prophet had asserted the contrary, "Were the *Quran* uncreate" they said, "it would be necessary to admit the existence of two Eternal Beings." From the moment when the *Quran*, or Word of God, was held as something created, it could no longer, having regard to the immutability of the Deity, be considered as belonging to His essence. Thereby the whole dogma of revelation was little by little seriously shaken, and many Mutazilites frankly declared that it was not impossible to write something as good as, or even better than, the *Quran*. They, therefore, protested against the dogma of the divine origin of the *Quran* and against Inspiration. The idea which they entertained of God was pure and more exalted than that of the orthodox. They would not listen to any corporeal conception of the Divinity. Mohomet had said, "One day ye shall see your Lord as you saw the full moon at the Battle of Badr," and these words, which the orthodox took literally, were for them an ever new stumbling block. They therefore, explained them away by saying that man, after his death, would know God by the eyes of the spirit, that is to say, by the reason. They equally refused to countenance the pretension that God created the unbeliever, "and showed themselves but little pleased with the consecrated formula which says of God that 'He hurteth and He advantageth'... They could not admit the miracles related in the *Quran*, and so denied that the sea was dried up to yield a passage for the Israelites led by Moses, that Moses' rod was changed into a serpent, and that Jesus raised the dead to life. Mahomet himself did not escape their attacks. There was one sect which maintained that the Prophet married too many wives, and that his contemporary, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, had much more self-restraint and piety than him, which also was perfectly true."

*The Orthodox Reaction under Mutawakkil.* Orthodox reaction began with Al-Mutawakkil (847-861 A.D.) who was the brother and successor of Al-Wathik. Al-Mutawakkil was

one of the persecutors of his age. He ordered that all churches built since the commencement of Islam should be demolished, and forbade the employment of Christians in government offices. His zeal against Ali and his descendants knew no bounds; nor did the Jews and Christians who ventured to prefer the sons of Ali to those of the wicked Caliph were trampled to death by the Turkish guards. He ordered the tomb of Al-Hussain, the martyr of Karbala to be destroyed. Its site was ploughed and sown and nobody was permitted to visit the holy ground. The prosecutions for heresy which were launched against the most prominent theologians of his age were numerous and even the great Bukhari was implicated. Dozy remarks on the character of this crazy Caliph :

"Notwithstanding all this, Al-Mutawakkil was extremely orthodox, and consequently the clerical party judged him quite otherwise than we should do. A well-known Muslim historian (Abu'l Fida) is of opinion that he went a little too far in his hatred for Ali, for the orthodox also held this prince, in his capacity of cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, in high esteem; 'but for the rest,' says he, he was of the number of the most excellent Caliphs, for he forbade man to believe that the *Quran* was created. He was orthodox, what matter then if he was a drunkard, a voluptuary, a perfidious scoundrel, a monster of cruelty? But he was even more than orthodox : animated by a burning zeal for the purity of doctrine, he applied himself to the persecution of all those who thought otherwise, torturing and exterminating them as far as possible. The prescriptions relative to the Christians and Jews, which during the preceding reigns had almost fallen into oblivion, were renewed and aggravated."

*Steiner's Remarks on the Mutazilites.* Steiner's remarks upon the Mutazilites, in the two works which he published in 1865, may be quoted here :

"We may venture to assert," says Steiner "that the Mutazilites were the first who not only read the translations of the Greek Naturalists and Philosophers prepared under the auspices of Al-Mansur and Al-Mamun (754-775 and

813-833 A.D.), and evolved therefrom all sorts of useful knowledge, but likewise exerted themselves to divert into new channels their entire thoughts, which had hitherto moved only in the narrow circles of ideas of the *Quran*, to assimilate to their own uses the Greek culture, and to combine it with their Mohammadan conscience. The philosophers proper, Al-Farabi (950 A. D.) Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 1037 A. D.) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1198 A. D.) being first to a later age. Al-Kindi (circ. 864 A. D.) was the earliest, and lived somewhat before them, but seems to have devoted his special attention to precisely those problems raised by the Mutazilites. His followers, however, avoided theological questions. Without directly assailing the Faith, they avoided all conflict with it so far as possible. Theology and Natural Science, including Philosophy, were treated as separate territories, with the harmonising of which no further trouble was taken. Ibn Sina appears to have been a pious Muslim yet Shahrastani includes him amongst those who properly belonged to no definite confession, but, standing outside positive religion, evolved their ideas out of their own heads (Ahlu'l-ahwa). Ibn Rushd also is accounted a good Muslim. He endeavoured to show that philosophical research was not only allowed, but was a duty, and one enjoined even by the *Quran*; but, for the rest, he goes his own way, and his writings are, with a few exceptions, of philosophic and scientific contents. Thus was the breach between philosophy and dogma already fully exhausted its strength in the subtle controversies of the schools of Basra and Baghdad. Abu'l-Husayn of Basra, a contemporary of Ibn Sina, was the last who gave independent treatment to their teaching, and in some points completed it. Zamakhshari (1143-4 A. D.) the famous and extraordinarily learned author of the *Kashshaf* reduced the moderate ideals of his predecessors to a pleasant and artistic form, and applied them consistently and adroitly to the whole region of Quranic exegesis, but gave to the teaching itself no further development."

*Ikhwanus-Safa*: A brief account may be given here of the society of Ikhwanus-Safa. It existed in the middle of the fourth century during the breathing space which Baghdad enjoyed after its capture by the Buwahids in 334 A. H.



The Buwahid dynasty was Shi'ite by creed, and its religious tenets were opposed by the majority of the people of Baghdad who had accepted the doctrine of Hanbal. The teaching of the society was a mixture of Neo-platonic speculation and mysticism with Aristotelian Natural Science, wrapped up in Mutazilite theology. It had also Pythagorean reverence for numbers. The Epistles of the sincere Brethren are fifty-one in number and form an Arabic Encyclopaedia. The members were divided into four categories: learners, teachers, guides and drawers nearer to God in supernatural vision. There was no man of outstanding ability or personality among them and the society seems to have faded out. It has been suggested that the Ikhwan-us-Safa was simply an auxiliary ramifications throughout the empire of the Abbasids. There is a certain amount of similarity between their formularies, and those of the Assassins. When the Mongols captured Alamut, they found a large collection of manuscripts, instruments and other curious objects.

It is possible that the refined eclecticism of the Ikhwan-us-Safa served as a foundation for some doctrines of the Assassins, Carmathians and the Druses. There is a similarity in doctrine in the works of the Ikhwan-us-Safa and those of Assassins and Druses. We find the same emphasis upon numbers and Pythagoreanism seems to be the unifying principle of these sects.

*The Philosophy of Islam.* I cannot deal with Muslim philosophy, as it is a vast subject, and the space at my disposal is limited. I therefore content myself with a sketch of the teachings of some of the philosophers.

### **Kufa and Basra as Centres of Intellectual Activity**

The two countries which called forth spiritual fervent in Islam in the first century A. H. were Syria and Iraq. The Euphrates gave birth to the Shiites and the Kharijites, while Syria was responsible for the Murjites and the Qadirites. In Damascus the Greeks came into contact for the first time with the scholars of the Byzantine Empire. Moreover, in the commercial intercourse between India, China and Byzantine, the Persians had played a very important part.

In western Europe, however, the Syrians had become the agents of civilization through their enterprise and initiative. They exported the wine, silk, pepper and spices of the east to Europe as far as France. They also imbibed Greek culture and spread it from Alexandria to many parts of the Middle East. Greek learning was taught in the schools of Edessa and Nisibin, Harran and Gundeshapur. By their activities, as well as by the concatenation of events, Syria had become the neutral ground where the Persian and Roman empires carried on intimate commercial and intellectual intercourse, and Syrian Christians played a most important part in strengthening the ties between Asia and Europe, and facilitating cultural and economic intercourse. Syriac was the language both of the western and of the eastern churches, but Greek was also taught along with it in many monastic schools. The education imparted in these schools was mainly ecclesiastical in its contents and method but medicine was one of the secular subjects which the students of the institutions were required to study. The city of Harran in the neighbourhood of Edessa in Mesopotamia occupied an important position in the world of scholarship. A very important institution had been established in Persia, and Syrian Christians were held in special honour as medical men. Another significant fact that must be noticed is that in the year 529, seven philosophers of the Neo-Platonic school who had been expelled from Athens found a refuge at Khusrav's court. They were allowed to go back to their homes in 549, as they were not happy in the strange surroundings of the Persian court. The Syrians had translated many Greek books from the fourth to the eighth century A. D. and their literary activities continued even after the Muslim conquest. These translations of the Syrians were generally faithful, though they omitted portions which were inconsistent with Christian principles, and much that was pagan in thought was replaced by Christian material. The ideas on the world, eternity, sin, etc. were recast according to Christian doctrines. The Arabs went even further with the process of adaptation and showed greater capacity for absorbing the language and culture of the Greeks than the Syrians. The Syrians were interested

in the first place in a kind of popular philosophy which was a variety of mystical Pythagorean-Platonic wisdom. In the Syrian cloisters the Platonic doctrine of the soul was discussed at length, and Plato is turned into an Oriental monk. The Syrians made a special study of Aristotle's logic which was only in a Neo-Platonic reduction. They now began the supremely important task of translating Greek and Syriac into Arabic, under the fostering care of Al-Mamun; the work was carried on with enthusiasm, and the Arab mind was illumined by the treasures which the Greek spirit unfolded to it. The work was carried on for two centuries from the eighth to the tenth, though many important works in the Greek language had been undertaken in the reign of Caliph Al-Mansur. In his reign, beginning was made on works on natural science, medicine, and logic. Ibn-al-Muqaffa took a prominent part in this work. In the time of Mamun and his successors, translations were organised on a systematic basis and Plato's works were translated into Arabic. The translators unfortunately cannot be regarded as great philosophers, and did not do their work spontaneously but were always at the command of the Caliph or some high official. A large proportion of translators were Christians. The subjects of these translations were mainly logic, philosophy and medicine.

Unfortunately Greek works on art, poetry and history were not accessible to the Arabs. There is no reference to the Greek historian, Thucydides; of Homer, the Arabs only picked up the famous sentence; that "one only should be ruler." They do not seem to have studied the Greek drama, and did not study the lyric poets. The Arabs came to know of Greek philosophy from Plutarch, Porphyry and others, as well as from the writings of Aristotle and Galen.

### **Confusion of Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic Doctrines**

There was another very serious drawback from which the Arabs suffered. The Arabs started the study of philosophy precisely at the point where the classical Greek philosophy ended. They began with the Neo-Platonic explana-

tion of Aristotle, and combined the study of Aristotle with the works of Plato. Among the Harraneans and also among the Muslim sects it was not merely the writings of Aristotle that were studied, but a combination of Aristotle with Neo-Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy. Aristotle did not reign as the sole monarch in the realm of philosophy probably his doctrine of the eternity of the world, and his psychology and ethics were regarded as dangerous. The social and political implications of politics were deemed revolutionary by the despotic rulers of the period. Hence we find Muslim theologians of the ninth and tenth centuries fulminating against Aristotle's theories. The real Aristotle was inaccessible to the Arabs who never learnt Greek and were content with the translations of Aristotle's writings which had been cast in a neo-Platonic garb by the mysticism of Syrian Christians. The effects of this confusion of neo-Platonism with Aristotle's doctrines were curious. Aristotle was regarded as the author of many works in which neo-Platonism is propounded. Hence the theology of Aristotle which the Arabs interpret is a curious compound of Neo-Platonism and Pythagoreanism. In it Plato is represented as the ideal man who gains a knowledge of things by means of his intuitive thinking, and therefore, the scientific precision, and the rigour of Aristotelian logic are dispensed with. Having eliminated pure reason in discussing these, it is easy to deduce that in discussing his highest reality, Absolute Being, intellect is of no account, as we can only apprehend it in an ecstatic vision. Plato, too like Aristotle, was misunderstood, as it was Plato as interpreted by Porphyry. It was not pure Platonism, but Neo-Platonism which the Arabs studied. Aristotle also came in a diluted form, in the guise of the later peripatetic schools. As a consequence, there was a mass of contradiction and confusion in the study of Plato and Aristotle. In the reign of Caliph Al-Mutasim, a Christian of Emessa in the Lebanon, translated parts of the *Enneads* of Plotinus into Arabic and entitled his work *The Theology of Aristotle*. This mental misconception proved most unfortunate for the development of Muslim scholarship, and the *Enneads* of Plotinus was regarded as the work of Aristotle. This had serious repercussions on the

development of Muslim philosophy for the Arabs immediately propounded theories for harmonizing the writings of these two great masters, and numerous philosophers worked enthusiastically on this work of reconciliation. Having in their opinion harmonized the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, theories were propounded to harmonize Plato and Aristotle's doctrines with the teaching of the *Quran*. It was a hybrid philosophy which the Arabs inherited, but they accepted it in good faith, as it came to them from the Greeks through Syria and Egypt. They failed to note the contradictory elements in the philosophy of Plato, Plotinus and Aristotle, and showed great reverence for most Greek philosophers. The earliest Muslim thinkers were so convinced of the superiority of Greek knowledge that they made no further and independent investigations into the domain of metaphysics and confined their attempt to harmonising their doctrine with the dogmas prevalent in their time. They took the Greek philosophy as they understood it, not as a doctrine which contained contradictory elements, but as a form of faith in which mysticism, Aristoteleanism, Neo-Platonism and Pythagoreanism jostled incongruously. Curiously enough, Aristotle's *Politics* was never translated although there are references to it in the writings of Arab philosophers. The democratic theories of ancient Greece would have been of the greatest help in an age of absolute despotism, and the polity of Muslim countries might have been gradually leavened with Greek political theories, had political theories of ancient Greeks been popularised among them. Moreover, the works of the Greek historians were neglected, and there are few references to them. They would have opened a new vista of a democratic republic ordering its life in accordance with the general will of its patriotic citizens. In studying Greek authors, the Arab philosophers seem to have been preoccupied with the problem of the soul, and they paid little attention to the democratic theories of the ancient Greeks. Ibn Khaldun's *Mukkadima* does not discuss Aristotle's political theories, and though it assesses the importance of many factors, such as climate, soil which contribute to the growth or decline of the people, it makes no reference to the salutary effect of democratic institutions



on the maintenance and preservation of a prosperous state. Absolutism remained the dominant feature of all the Muslim states of Asia down to the present time and the main reason for the frequent revolutions at Baghdad was the despotism of the ruler, which was wholly inconsistent with the basic principle of Islam.

In spite of these criticisms it is astonishing that the great Muslim philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn-Sina Ibn Rushd were able to comment upon Aristotle with skill and brilliance, and unconsciously rejected and threw out nonsense and falsehood which the bowdlerized versions of Aristotle and Plato had introduced in their speculation. They were men of the greatest intellect of their time and by a miracle of insight overcame the difficulty which garbled translations of Greek philosophers, had created with insight, intuition and vision.

Their study of Greek philosophy under these auspices developed a tendency to mysticism. This is not surprising as they regarded the philosophy of Neo-Platonism and Aristotle as synonymous. Many of them did not verify their sources and references to find out if they were absolutely correct as they had not mastered the Greek language, and so long as the form of their syllogism was logically correct, they did not take the trouble to discover whether their premises were based upon well-ascertained facts. I am indebted to a profound study of the subject by Dr. T. J. Boer, who has dealt with it in his *History of Philosophy in Islam*. The results of the study of Greek philosophy were visible in the development of scholasticism in Asia and Europe almost simultaneously. Its domination in both the continents was complete. Aristotle rules unchallenged both in the East and the West. And both Christianity and Islam enlisted the teachings of the great philosopher in support of their respective creeds. Averroes was the greatest commentator of Aristotle in medieval Europe, and St. Thomas Aquinas was the most enthusiastic disciple of Aristotle in the middle ages. We have therefore the paradoxical sight of Muslim philosophers quoting Aristotle in support of Islamic principles in the East, and the greatest champions of Christianity



in medieval Europe, Aquinas, making Aristotle the supreme source of inspiration for the elucidation of the Christian creed.

It is impossible for me to give even a brief account of Muslim philosophers as they played a very important part in the intellectual development of Islam until the fanaticism of the Fakihs in Asia and Spain rendered metaphysical speculation dangerous. Reference may, however, be made to a few outstanding men, whose influence on the development of philosophical thought among Muslims has been considered.

*Al-Kindi.* Al-Kindi is commonly called the philosopher of the Arabs, as he is the only example of a student of Aristotle who could claim Arab descent. He can hardly be regarded as a philosopher in the proper sense of the term, as he devoted himself mainly to translations, and is said to have translated numerous works on all sorts of subjects. He was alive during the reactionary regime of Al-Mutawakkil, and died in 260 A. H. With his death the golden period of a free inquiry ended, and the reactionary period of persecution began. Malik ibn Anas used to stop all speculation and argument by uttering the formula, "God's *istina* (setting Himself firmly upon His throne) is known; how it is done is unknown; it must be believed; questions about it are against religion (*bid'a*)". Later on, the orthodoxy enlisted the support of able men who were prepared to rationalise the traditions. Hence a school of *Mutakallims* arose, who used *Kalam* in order to meet the arguments of the Mutazilites. Later on all these arguments were systematised and the *Mutakallims* devoted themselves to adducing reasons in defence of the faith as they conceived it. Al-Junayd had discussed the unity of God while Ash-Shaffi argued that there should be a select band of men to defend and purify the faith; Al-Mushasibi who was a contemporary of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, was suspected by the ultra-orthodox of defending his faith with argument, and Hanbal was therefore displeased with him. Another contemporary of Hanbal, Al-Karabisi also incurred his displeasure. The movement for dogmatism spread in Mesopotamia, where Al-Ashari carried on his work

in Egypt, At-Tahawi was working on the same principles, while in Samarkand, Al-Matridi was engaged on a similar task. All these names have been forgotten, but the name of Al-Ashari is linked up indissolubly with the campaign against the Mutazilites.

Kufa and Basra were the two chief centres of intellectual activity throughout this period, and many of the movements—religious, philosophical and literary had their origin in one or other of these cities. Al-Ashari was born at Basra in 260, in a period of revolutionary ardour, when the Zaydites and Carmathians were in revolt, and the Mutazilites were intensifying their campaign. Many stories are current of a radical change in his beliefs. There are two stages in the evolution of his system. In the first stage, he explained away the anthropomorphism of God's face, hands, etc. In the second stage, when he came under Hanbal's influence, he explained that anthropomorphism was to be accepted, *bila-Kayfa wala tashbih* without asking how, and without drawing any comparison. On the vexed question what is a thing? he seems to have anticipated Kant. He and his followers held that existence was the "self" (*ayn*) of the entity, and not a quality of state. On the vexed question of free will, he took up a position which produced blind fatalism; the Mutazilites on the other hand, gave the initiative power to man. Al-Ashari held that man cannot create anything, the only creator is God; moreover man's power does not produce any effect on his actions. God creates in His creatures power (*qudra*) and choice (*ikhtiyyar*). God creates in man a capacity for action which corresponds to the power and choice thus created. It follows that the action of the creature is created by God so far as initiative and creative power are concerned; but it is acquired by the creature, as it corresponds to his power and choice, with which he had been previously endowed. Ashari's analysis of free will reminds one of Leibnitz's theory of pre-established harmony and Kant's conception of existence.<sup>61</sup>

The last of the Mutazilite was Zamakhahari who died in 538 A. H. He was, however, a very mild heretic and escaped persecution. After Al-Ghazali's brilliant Meedonald *op. cit.* p. 192.

liant defence of Islam, the Asharites were the dominant school so far as the East was concerned. The great Saladin, who died in 589 A. H., was instrumental in establishing its ascendancy in Egypt and founded academies at Alexandria and Cairo; while Fakhrud-din ar-Razi, who died in 606 A. H. was busy writing his monumental commentary on the *Quran* the *Maftabi al-Ghayab*, the Keys of the Unseen, and continuing the work of Al-Ghazali. Philosophy had become a heresy and treated precisely as the Mutazilite heresy was dealt with, and it was consequently transformed into scholasticism so that it may be tolerated by the orthodox. When we reach Ibn Khaldun, we find that *Kalam* has become stereotyped, philosophy is regarded as heresy and dogma has crystallised into a rigid and inflexible element. Ibn Khaldun declares that no heretics are left. Reason cannot grasp the nature of God nor can it weigh His unity of His qualities. God is unknowable, and it is our duty to accept what we are told about Him by His prophets. It is not surprising that free inquiry into the working of mind and laws of nature were discouraged by theologians, and scientific research in countries dominated by these men was deemed inconsistent with the new theology which the scholastics had evolved. A study of Christian scholasticism in the West in the same period, exhibits the same tendency. There was no real mental freedom and no free philosophical inquiry as the basic ideas of Islam which had made it a world force in the first three centuries of the Caliphate in the hands of fanatics, had lost vitality and free inquiry into the mysteries of mind and of matter was restricted and the conception of science as a living force which would transform nature was not developed till the nineteenth century. In the West, the clergy pursued relentlessly all who were suspected of dabbling in science or the mysteries of the soul. Henceforth temporal power is ranged on the side of orthodoxy, and stern measures are adopted against any teaching which disturbs vested interests. The Caliphs became the leaders of this reaction. Caliph Mutadid distinguished himself by his fiery zeal for orthodoxy, and in a decree passed in 279 A. H. (892 A. D.) he forbade the sale of philosophical and polemical works. Caliph Qadir went further and issued a formal edict

of prescription against heretics and free-thinkers, and all books which antagonised orthodoxy were consigned to the flames. Christian Europe followed the same policy. The Code of Justinian contained sixty enactments against heresy and condign punishment was inflicted on any one who deviated from the norm.

Al-Kindi's views bear a Mutazilite stamp, and he opposed the theory that reason is the sole and sufficient source of knowledge, and tried to bring prophecy into harmony with reason. Kindi thought that the world is a work of God, but His influence in its descent is transmitted through many intermediate agencies. In his view the High Reality and all activity belonged to the spirit of mind, and must adapt itself to the desire of the spirit. Midway between the spirit of God and the material and bodily world stands the soul which first called into being the world of the spheres. From this soul of the world the human soul is an emanation. Kindi declares that our soul is of an imperishable substance, and descended from the world of reason into that of the senses, but is endowed with a recollection of its earlier conditions. The soul is not at all born in this world, as it has many needs, which cannot be satisfied on earth, and are therefore attended with painful emotions. The world is constantly changing, and reason alone can achieve stability. It is therefore essential for the fulfilment of our wishes that we must turn to the eternal blessing of reason, to the fear of God, to science and to good works. Kindi then develops the doctrine of the reason or the spirit or mind. This doctrine after modifications occupies an important place in the growth of Muslim philosophy. Spirit has four aspects: (i) First, the spirit which is ever real, the cause and the Essence of all that is real in the spiritual world, in other words, God or the First Spirit. Secondly, the Spirit as the Reasoning capacity of the Human Soul; thirdly as the Habit or actual possession of the soul which we can use at any moment; fourth and last activity, by which a reality within the soul may be carried over to the reality that is without. The real spirit or mind we have therefore received from above, and the third *Aql* is therefore called *aql mustafad*. The

doctrine that all our knowledge about things must come from a source outside of us, the doctrine of *aqi mustafad* or spirit which we received from above, runs right through the whole of Arabian philosophy and passes over into Christian philosophy. This theory is in reality the Neoplatonic-Aristotelian theory and goes back to the "Nous" doctrine of Alexander of Aphrodisias. Alexander had, however, explicitly stated that according to Aristotle there is three-fold "Nous." Kindi seems to think, on the other hand, that he is representing the teachings of Plato and Aristotle. In Kindi, as well as other Arab philosophers, we have a classical example of the union of the Neo-Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic views; we have also another feature which these philosophers possess in common, *i.e.* a serious attempt to bring Plato and Aristotle into agreement. Kindi seems to have translated Aristotle's works and the Aristotelian physics had a great influence upon his philosophy.

In the tenth century the logicians or metaphysicians became differentiated from the natural philosophers. The latter are concerned mainly with the concrete phenomena of nature as in geography and ethnology, while the former seek to comprehend things on *a priori* principles and inquire everywhere after the Idea or Essence of things.

*Farabi.* We may now deal with another philosopher, Farabi, who made an intensive study of Aristotle, and is therefore called the "Second Aristotle." Since his day the number and order of works of Aristotle have remained fixed. Farabi thought that the theology of Aristotle "was a genuine work," and he zealously seeks to harmonise Plato and Aristotle. In his opinion the two differ only in method and not in doctrine. Farabi deals comprehensively with the human soul, spirit and mind. God is seen better in the regular gradation of Beings which proceed from Him than in Himself. From Him, the one alone, comes the All: for His knowledge is the highest power. Farabi was one of the few philosophers who dealt with politics but of an ideal republic. In his system, the ideal of Plato's *Republic* is realised in the philosopher as king. He declared that men are brought together through necessity and render obedience to



the will of a single person, who is the embodiment of the State. If the head of a state is ignorant or vicious or tyrannical, the state over which he rules is bound to be bad. An excellent state is one in which a philosopher is ruler. In his description of the rulers who represent the ideal prince we find the highest development of political thought among the Arabs. Farabi did not, however, apply the principles of democracy to government, as that would have led to his prosecution by the state, and in many important respects his teachings fall short of the ideal which the jurist Mawardi had propounded for the Muslim community and the Muslim ruler. According to Farabi state is perfect only when it forms a religious community and the souls of citizens in ignorant state are consequently devoid of reason. For the depraved ruler there is punishment in the world beyond. We find here the delegation of all power by the people to the ruler and the rationalisation of despotism. Mawardi's democratic ideal, which he deduced from Islamic principles, has disappeared into oblivion.

*Ibn Sina.* Ibn Sina gave a systematic account of medicine and his work on medicine remained unchallenged for centuries. He was one of the greatest physicians of his time. Ibn Sina conforms entirely to Farabi's logic, while in metaphysics and physics he differed from Farabi, as by not deriving matter from God, he placed the spiritual at a higher elevation than the material. It follows that the soul is of immeasurably greater importance as an intermediary between the spiritual and the corporeal. Ibn Sina, like most Arab philosophers, declares that there are many gradations of spirit. We have first the world-spirit which emerges out of the first one and plurality has its origin in it and is the second spirit. By thinking of its own cause, plurality generates a third spirit, which governs the outermost sphere. When it thinks of itself, a soul is produced by means of which the sphere of spirit exercises its influence. Then emerges from it a body, *viz.* the outermost sphere. And so the process of various forms of spirit goes on. Every spirit, thus generated except the last of the series, liberates from itself a trinity—spirit, soul and body. The soul in



this trinity is the connecting link. Last of all, we have the active spirit which closes the series. The whole of this process takes place in the realm of Matter, which is the eternal and pure possibility of all that exists, and at the same time the limitation of the operation of the spirit.

*Aristotle and Muslim Philosophy.* The sayings of Prophet Muhammad on the reverence due to knowledge and his emphasis on duty of Muslims to scholarship and learning are known all over the world, to Muslims of every country and clime. From this obligation no Muslim is exempted. Muslim kingdoms everywhere gave effective expression to this ideal, and developed arts and sciences on a scale which had been attained only in ancient Greece and Rome. But for their zeal and devotion in which the humblest as well as the highest in the land took part with stable sincerity Europe would have taken several centuries to emerge from the age of raw feudalism. The Muslim creed was followed in different spheres of activity, in the promotion of scientific research, the cultivation of literature, the translation of ancient Sanskrit and Greek classics, and the evolution of an architecture which is a source of constant surprise and wonder to peoples of all nations. With the evangelical purity of conviction, Muslims threw themselves into the task of administration with renewed vigour. Again, in their enthusiasm for knowledge, and study of ancient classics, Muslims introduced a new spirit into philosophical discussion and a new style of treatment, literary as well as scientific, which tended to substitute humane culture and solid research in the sciences for the systematic pedantry and preposterous logic of the crabbed and narrow-minded medieval scholastics. They departed from the customary line of thought, which had become saturated with purely verbal and wholly futile distinctions of an effete logic, and gave energy and actuality to subjects which had been discussed for ages in the crabbed theological style characteristic of the centuries. The sheer waste of energy which was involved in the interminable controversies between the school of Nominalism and Realism, which the finest minds of the Middle Ages discussed, had no attraction for men who re-

garded controversies among medieval schoolmen as a classical example of barren dialectics, and were fruitfully busy studying Greek and Latin antiquities, and organising researches into the mysteries of nature. The graceless method of schoolmen which was both crabbed and pedantic, lacking the charm of style and elegance of diction, had become a byword for ineptitude. Nobody except students of theology read their ponderous and forbidding folios in modern times. The Italians of the Renaissance who studied them after the re-discovery of Greek classics, regarded the works of medieval schoolmen as grotesque chimeras generated by the indigestion of half-starved intellectual stomachs. Muslims, on the other hand, inaugurated a new era of discovery and exploration. They refused to force the stream of learning backward into dry scholastic and linguistic channels, and started ploughing for themselves a fresh course in the fields of philosophical and scientific discovery. Hitherto, speculations concerning the nature of man and the world, philosophical explorations into the regions of dimly apprehended mysteries of physics, researches in astronomy and political problems, religious questions which went to the core of a man's life ; in fact, all the storm and stress of the new age of discovery and inspiration, the ferment of the modern minds and will and conscience, which had burst the bounds, had so far been rigorously excluded from the schools and all these investigations were regarded as antagonistic to religion and morality.

It is impossible for me to deal even with the rudiments of Muslim contribution to arts and sciences, as the literature on the subject is enormous, and will require volumes, but I must refer here to the influence which Aristotle exercised on the minds of Muslims and later on, through the Muslims on Christians in the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages studied an Aristotle which has been rescued by Muslims and translated into Arabic by Syrian Christians and Persians. The resuscitated Aristotle infused new life and vigour into philosophical enquiry. The number of Muslim philosophers who devoted themselves to Aristoteleian studies is numerous, and it is quite impossible for me to enumerate them here. In the Platonic system the distinction between ideas,

regarded as sole realities, and phenomena, which were marked off from the ideal world to which they owed their qualities of relative substantiality and cognisability is clear. Aristotle attempted an explanation of this problem by propounding his theory of form and matter, activity and passivity, energy and potentiality, which in his philosophy, are inseparable from the reality of the individual.. He represented the world as a scale of existence. It began with form and matter which are inherent in the simplest object, and ended in God. God was therefore the form of forms, the thought of thoughts. He is independent of matter, and unchangeable. The forms which are resumed in God are disseminated through the Universe in a hierarchy of substances from the most complex below God to the most simple. In this scheme, matter is concerned as the mere base, necessary, of course, to every individual but God; an essential element of reality, but beyond the reach of knowledge.<sup>51</sup> The form or the universal alone was intelligible. This necessarily led to a division between reality and truth and the individual, composed of form and matter, alone is substantial and concrete, while the universal alone is cognisable. Another question inevitably arises, Where is God's place in this system? Is He immanent in the Universe, or wholly distinct from it? Unfortunately Aristotle's language is capable of each of these interpretations. God is universal, and immaterial, and is the highest form, and yet at the same time He is an individual substance; whereas according to the fundamental conception which Aristotle himself propounds, the coherence of form and matter in the individual is necessary to reality. Just as Aristotle failed to explain the relation of God with the world, so he failed to clarify the relation of God to human intellect. The medieval schoolmen, St. Thomas Aquinas and others, appropriated Aristotle for the service of Christian theology, and St. Thomas filled up the vacuums and formal outline of Aristotle and theosophied his whole system. St. Thomas viewed the soul as the essential form of the human body and affirmed its separate existence in

<sup>51</sup> See a brilliant analysis of this subject in J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance*.

person and its separate immortality. It acquired a habit of existence in the body which sufficed for its perpetual and independent survival. This was the dominant theory in the Middle Ages and it held the field for a long time. The great Arabian philosopher, Averroes, however, interpreted Aristotle to mean that the active intellect alone, which he regards as common to all human beings, was immortal. This implied, of course, denial of the immortality of the individual. According to it, individual men live and die, but the species is eternal. The active intellect enters human consciousness in persons who benefit by it and then perish. Knowledge is thus preserved and accumulated for the race, but is transitory for each soul. Averroes thought that at one end of the universal hierarchy was matter, at the other end God. Between God and man in the descending scale are intelligences of the several spheres. From the lowest or lunar sphere humanity derives the active intellect. It is a substantial entity, separate no less from God than from the human soul in which it retains the knowledge of a lifetime. Averroes' doctrine gained wide acceptance, and though it was repudiated by orthodox school, yet, it was supported by a number of Muslim thinkers. The implications of his theory were fully developed by Italians of the Renaissance period and the problem which the latter had to solve was: Is the soul immortal? What did Aristotle say regarding the immortality of the soul?

The tenth century in Muslim Spain was a time of the highest material and intellectual development, as the ninth century witnessed the Renaissance of Asia. However, intellectual life in Spain lacked the variety and intensity of Asia, as philosophy had fewer representatives in Spain and the Fakihis dominated the state. This was due partly to the fact that the Spanish Muslims were dominated by the Fakihis, and the heresies which the East tolerated were mercilessly suppressed. Religious uniformity was rigorously enforced, and Spain did not permit atheists; no adherents of Zoroaster and Mutazilite heretics were permitted to exercise their creeds. Christianity was a tolerated religion. There was indulgence in wine, woman and song, and the courts of

numerous independent principalities in Spain gave a great impetus to cultivation of literature and fine arts. However, the philosophers played no part in the political life of the state, and they remained a suspected class, isolated and insulated from the living tradition of their people. Hence, philosophy was the preserve of a few men of genius. Very few schools of philosophy developed in Spain and we have very few accounts of free and unfettered discussions of philosophical subjects. In the East there were numerous intermediary agencies between orthodoxy and philosophy, and the gulf between the masses and the philosophers was not so wide. In the west the philosophers were always in danger of persecution by the fanatical mob, as well as by ignorant Qazis and despotic rulers.

The philosophy of Ibn Baddja is based mainly upon Farabi and his physical and metaphysical theories are substantially in agreement with those of the latter. Ibn Baddja starts with the assumption that Matter cannot exist without some Form while Form may exist by itself without Matter. These forms constitute a series to which the development of the human spirit corresponds in so far as it realises the rational idea. Man's task is to comprehend all the spiritual forms together. Baddja discusses various forms.

### **Ibn Rushd (Averroes)**

Ibn Rushd was born at Cordova of a family of Qazis in 1126. He was Qazi at Seville in 1169 and shortly afterwards in Cordova. His father and grandfathers had also been Qazis of their native cities. When agitation was started against philosophers and their writings were committed to the flames, Ibn Rushd was banished by Abu Yusuf to Lucena near Cordova and died in Morocco, on the 10th December 1198. Ibn Rushd was the greatest Muslim philosopher of the Middle Ages who devoted most of his philosophical writing to the interpretation of Aristotle. Many of the Greek works, which are now lost, were still known to Ibn Rushd, in translations. Dante gives him the name of "the commentator." To Ibn Rushd, Aristotle is the supremely perfect man, the greatest thinker, the philosopher

who was in possession of an infallible truth. Ibn Rushd attacked Ibn Sina, and disagreed with Farabi and Ibn Badjdja and launched a vigorous attack against Al-Ghazali. Strangely enough he himself is far from having got beyond the interpretation of Neo-Platonic expositors and the misconceptions which Syrian translators of Aristotle had introduced. Frequently he follows even superficial Themistius in opposition to the judicious Alexander of Aphrodisias, or else he tries to combine their views. Ibn Rushd recognises that religion has a truth of its own, but he asserts that revelation as contained in the *Quran* does not aim at making men learned, but at making them better. It is not knowledge but morality which is the object of religion. He made a notable contribution to philosophical thought by conceiving the world as an eternal process of "becoming." He regards the world as an eternally necessary unity without the possibility of non-existence or of different existences. Matter and Form are inseparable, and forms are contained in matter after the manner of germs. Material forms, which are nothing else but natural forces, operate in an eternal process of generation and are never separated from matter. There is no absolute extinction or creation, for all movement is a transition from potentiality to actuality and *vice versa*. There are of course gradations in the world of Being. Like all Arab philosophers, Ibn Rushd did not free himself from the philosophy of Farabi and Ibn Badjdja, though he subjects them to severe criticism. The material or substantial form stands midway between mere accident and pure Form. He is of the opinion that the human soul is related to its body as form is to matter, and rejects the theory of numerous immortal souls which had been propounded by Ibn Sina. He goes further and says that the soul has an existence only as a completion of the body with which it is associated.

The eternal process of "becoming" presupposes an eternal Movement as well as an eternal Mover. Ibn Rushd argued that if the world had an origin, then we must postulate another world which preceded it and the process may go on without end. Hence it is only on the basis of the world moved as a unity and of eternal necessity that we



can infer a Being separate from the world yet eternally moving it, who in his continually producing that movement and maintaining the fair order may be called the Author of the world. Ibn Rushd differed fundamentally from the theology of his period on these important points. (1) The eternity of the material world and of the spirits that move it. (2) The casual nexus in all that happens in the world. By advocating this doctrine, Ibn Rushd dispensed the need for providence, miracle and the like. (3) He emphasised the perishable nature of the individual and thereby impaired the foundations of individual immortality. He regards religion from the point of view of a statesman, and values it on account of its moral purpose. Those theologians who wished to understand religious dogmas intellectually, instead of obeying them with docile faith are mistaken as reason cannot be applied to religion. He was opposed to Ghazali's teachings because the latter had reinforced philosophy in support of religious doctrines, and had merely created doubt in the minds of many sincere believers. He thought that Al-Ghazali's philosophy may lead to atheism and create doubt. Religion and philosophy are in agreement because their object is the same and they are related as practice and theory. Philosophy must acknowledge the validity of religion in its own domain and ought not to reject religion. Ibn Rushd thought that philosophy is the highest form of truth and at the same time the most sublime religion. To Ibn Rushd the religion of the philosopher is the knowledge of all that exists. His influence on the philosophy of medieval Europe was profound and his doctrines were propounded in many cities of Italy in the period of the Renaissance. Christian Scholasticism also incorporated many elements of his doctrine. Renan's scholarly work on Averroes gives a lucid analysis of this great Arab philosopher, and has been translated into Hindustani. Ibn Rushd's philosophy contained the germs of Materialism, while his analysis of the process which converts potentiality into actuality anticipated some elements of the highest Hegelian dialects.

*Ibn Hazm.* A brief account may be given here of another prominent Spanish philosopher, Ibn Hazm, who

died in 456 (A. H.) He specialised in vituperation, and controversy, and was coupled with Al-Hajjaj, the cruel governor of the Umayyads for merciless criticism of his opponents. "The sword of Al-Hajjaj and the tongue of Ibn Hazm," became a popular saying in Spain. His doctrines were neglected for over a century as the *Fakibs* dominated the state apparatus, and denounced as heresy any attempt by bolder spirits to speculate on the problems of ultimate Reality. The Mullas were saturated with dogmatism of the narrowest dye, and ignored the teachings not only of the *Quran* but also of the Hadith or traditions. To this obscurantism, Hazm was relentlessly opposed. He ignored Taqlid, and contended that each person must form the text, his own idea of the doctrine; he propounded a doctrine of the names of God, and based God's qualities on that doctrine. Ibn Hazm argued that the *Quran* applies to Him the words, "The most merciful of those that show mercy and the words *arhamu-r-rabimin* are one of God's names and are applied by Him to Himself and should not be regarded as predicating mercy. We should not in this sense glean light on God's nature. They are one of the ninety-nine most beautiful names, which the Prophet has spoken in a tradition."

The development of new philosophical systems was followed usually by persecution. New opinions were condemned as heresies, though some of them were incorporated into the orthodox creed, if they survived the test, and others were rejected, and Muslim religious life went on broadening and enriching itself, by incorporating significant elements of the new doctrines. After a time heresy almost disappeared as the important elements of new doctrines were assimilated to the dominant school of theology.

The doctrines of Asharites went through the same phases. For a time, they were attacked by the ultra-orthodoxy, but after the accession of Alp-Arslan, and the encouragement which the great Prime Minister Nizamul-Mulk gave to learning and research, the popularity of Asharite doctrines was assured.

*Al-Ghazali.* Al-Ghazali is the greatest philosopher in the Islamic world, and has exercised profound influence

on the life and thought of Muslims. "The equal of Augustine in philosophical and theological importance, by his side the Aristotelian philosophers of Islam, Ibn Rushd, and all the rest seem beggarly compilers and scholiasts. When his work was done, the revelation of the mystic (*Kashf*) was not only a full part but the basal part in the structure of Muslim theology." Islam has not fully understood Al-Ghazali but until long after him the horizon of Muslims was wider and their air clearer for his work.<sup>52</sup>

Macdonald's estimate of Ghazali is eminently just, and is based on an objective analysis of his life and work. Ghazali's philosophy is the result of his varied experience, and he has stamped on his teaching the depth and breadth of his personality. His work *Munqidh min al-Dalal* or "Rescuer from Error," contains his apology for the faith, and gives us a most interesting account of his life.

Ghazali was born at Tus in 450 A. H. His father died when he was young, and he was educated by a trusted Sufi friend of the family. He began the study of theology and canon law, mainly because these subjects promised wealth and fame, but conscious of potent energy in himself and proud of his intellectual powers, he went to Naisabur as pupil and assistant of the Imam al-Haramayn. He remained there till the death of the Imam in 578, when he left to seek his fortune, and was patronised by Nizam-ul-Mulk, who appointed him professor at his college at Baghdad. He achieved success as a professor but was obliged to leave it after four years, owing to some nervous ailment. He left Baghdad suddenly, and many persons were puzzled by his sudden flight. He seems to have gone through the travail of scepticism and doubt, but came back to the faith of his forefathers, as he found that reason by itself was wholly inadequate for a true understanding of religion. Al-Ghazali tried scholastic philosophy, and found it barren; by this time, the Ashariites had exhausted their utility by demolishing the Mutazilite heresy and did not contribute anything, after their destructive energy. At this time philosophers were divided into three schools. The Materialists rejected the Creator and

contended that the world has existed from all eternity. Then were the Deists, the *Tabiis* or Naturalists, who conceded the need for a Creator, who in their opinion, was mote like a machine; they therefore, rejected a future life. Finally, there were the Theists. It must be admitted that Ghazali deals with the various schools of philosophy objectively, and after subjecting them to a critical analysis, rejects the doctrines of some as unbelief, and of others as heresy. That Ghazali was influenced by his philosophical studies is clear from the way he examines the theories which he criticises. Ghazali made a study of the doctrines of Ismailis, and like others before him, failed to probe into their mysteries. The path of mysticism now lay clearly before him, but he trod it with circumspection. He began to study the writings of mystics and found that it was not through intellectual discipline but through feeling and emotion, that he could understand Sufism. He had completed the circuit of thought, and came back to the faith of his people, after profound study and meditation. Having undergone intensely a variety of religious experiences, in his quest for the eternal he came to believe firmly in God, prophecy and in the last judgment. Ghazali has given us an unforgettable description of the mental anguish through which he passed, in 488 A. H. He then wandered in Syria in search of true doctrine, and devoted two years to Sufi exercise. He went on his ceaseless travels through many lands in the Middle East. He seems to have travelled through Palestine and Arabia. In his *Tabafut* or Destruction he turned the weapons of philosophers against them, and attacked the law of Causality, contending with Hume, that we can know nothing of cause or effect; all that we know is that one thing follows another. He shows that philosophy cannot prove the existence of the Creator; nor can it prove that the Creator is one. We are therefore thrown back on revelation, which God gives to the individual soul through the prophets, and all our real knowledge is derived from these sources. Ghazali studied profoundly traditions of the Prophet, in the later part of his life, and found spiritual nourishment therein after his fruitless study of philosophy and scholasticism. Ghazali compares the

soul of man to the rays of the sun reaching a thing on earth and fertilising; it hence man's soul is different from anything else. It is a *ruhani* or the pearl of soul, has no corporeality and has neither dimension, position, nor locality. It has no shape, as it belongs to the spiritual world. It has a spark of the divine in it, and rules the body, as God rules the Universe. Ghazali emphasises Will throughout, as distinguished from Thought, as he thinks that from Thought, nothing can develop, but from Will comes the whole Universe. As God the Creator is a Willer, so is man. Hence, they are akin, and man can therefore know and recognise God. As a tradition puts it, "A man who knows his own soul, knows the Lord." This is also the basic doctrine of Sufism and many Sufi doctrines had a tendency to pantheism. He therefore tried to safeguard himself against the implications of this doctrine. While Ghazali accepts the discoveries of science, he adds that the most important facts and laws have been divinely revealed. He taught that the heavens and the earth are direct works of God, and were produced out of nothing by His Will; they are guarded by His Will and one day will pass away at His Command. Ghazali thus attempts the harmony of science with religion, and declares that behind the order of nature lies the omnipotent God who says "Be" and the Universe comes into being.

Ghazali's attitude towards philosophy is that of an agnostic. He argues that we cannot know about the absolute and the infinite, but only the relative and the finite we can have no positive knowledge of the attributes of God through reason alone. This can only be gained in books sent down to prophets, or in the personal revelations of God's saints. The Jewish philosophers of the period, such as the great Maimonides, who was a friend of Ibn Rushd, and Yehuda Halevi who died in 1145 A. D., have adduced the same argument for the existence of God.

*Ghazali's Services to Islam.* Ghazali's services to Islam were invaluable, and he moulded Muslim thought for centuries. His works are studied by millions of Muslims throughout the world. Ghazali rescued Islam from barren

and stereotyped phrases and dogmas, and brought them into living contact with the *Quran* and the traditions. Ghazali destroyed the dead wood of Muslim scholasticism and emphasised the element of fear in his doctrines. He had felt the horrors of hell, and he made other persons feel them. Moreover it was through Ghazali's powerful personality and tremendous expositions of mysticism that Sufism found an assured place in the bosom of Islam.

Finally he brought philosophy into the market-place, so that the ordinary mind could follow its process of reasoning, by stripping it of the philosophical jargon in which its theories had been enmeshed and adapted its phraseology to the comprehension of the ordinary person.

His *Tahafut*, or *Destruction*, is intended for the ordinary man. "Islam has never outgrown him, has never fully understood him. In the renaissance of Islam which is now rising to view, his time will come, and the new life will proceed from a renewed study of his works."<sup>53</sup>

After Ghazali's monumental work, the Asharites became the dominant school and Saladin's patronage established their supremacy in his domain.

*Sufism.* I cannot deal with other Muslim philosophers, as it would require too much time to do justice to the subject, and I conclude this part with an analysis of the influence of Sufism on Muslim thought.

Muslim mysticism or Sufism may be regarded as love of Supreme Beauty. The thought of the East and the West converges in the fundamentals of love. In the admiration for the Supreme Beauty, minor differences in the East and West are annihilated, and mystics all over the world, whether in India, China or Europe, sing the same prayer for

<sup>53</sup> Macdonald, p. 240. My account of Muslim Theology is based mainly on Macdonald's work, cited above, as well as on T. J. De Boer's *History of Philosophy in Islam*. Both are outstanding works. A number of other works, such as Professor E. G. Browne's *Literary History of Persia* and Professor R. A. Nicholson's *Literary History of the Arabs*, have also been consulted.



Union with the Beloved. There are bound to be differences in detail, but all of them tend, in the main, in the same direction. The same idea is expressed by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagvata Gita*, "He who worships Me (son of Kunti) although (it may be) contrary to ancient rule, He who with devotion, offers to me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept for striving self, offered as it is with devotion." Jalal-uddin Rumi expounded in Persia what Sankaracharya was preaching in India, and other mystics were expounding in European countries. Mysticism seems to have flourished between the eighth and fifteenth centuries in Europe and Asia, though a number of mystics in Europe developed their doctrines later on. It was in this period that Muslim mysticism attained its fullest development. Muslim mystics and Sufis wielded considerable influence on the masses as well as the classes, and many of the leading Sufis were zealous missionaries. Sufism passed by easy gradations into mysticism, and before the end of the second century A. H. (820 A.D.) these ascetics began to be known as Sufis. "Suf" means "wool" and the term was applied to a person who had renounced the world and become an ascetic which henceforward meant that he had become a Sufi. Neo-Platonic thought profoundly influenced Christian monasticism and Muslim Sufism. Buddhist legends and ceremonies were still practised in Central Asia, and Sufism in the legends of Central Asia received a specific mould from Buddhist traits and traditions. Pilgrimage and cult of saints became an important part of Buddhist doctrines in its later phases. The Sufis of the Bayazid school developed heterodox tendencies, and were regarded by the orthodox as heretics. Bistami was exiled many times from his native town and Mansur al-Hallaj was crucified. In India, a number of able Muslims were deeply influenced by Sufi doctrines, and our beloved prince, Dara Shikoh, was a fervent Sufi, Abul Fazl and Fayzi also belonged to the Sufi School.

*Influence of Sufism.* The influence of Sufism in Persia, Central Asia, Turkey and Northern India remained supreme for several centuries. During the last quarter of the present century Sufism has been dislodged from many of its points

of vantage. In Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Pasha waged a relentless war against Sufis and in the newly awakened countries of Asia, Sufis and mystics get a short shrift. North Africa and North India are, however, the strongholds of many orders of Sufism. In Sind, *Peers* dominate the religious life of the province, and their influence on the life and thought of the people is enormous. Sufis rendered great services to Islam in the past, and their influence is not likely to diminish in the near future, unless there is a mental revolution in the backward countries of Asia.

*Sufi Doctrines.* According to Sufis, Reality is the Universal Will, is self-manifestation, reflection in the mirror of the universe. The world, in comparison with reality, is a mere illusion, or non-reality, or not being. Some Sufis believe in the oneness of existence; to them multiplicity is an expression of underlying unity. The phenomenal world is an outward manifestation of the one Real, while the essence of the Real is beyond human knowledge. The Real has a substance with two accidents, one as creator and the other as creature, one is visible, and the other is invisible. In its essence, the Real is attributeless, nameless, indescribable and incomprehensible but when covered with *avidya* or descent from its absolute quality, names and attributes are found. The reader may be referred to Nicholson's *Mystics of Islam* and Massingnong's work on Muslim mystics for a detailed exposition of the Sufi doctrine. The sum of these names and attributes is the phenomenal world, which represents reality under the form of externality.

*The Dualist.* Sufis considered that the world is not a mere illusion or ignorance, but exists as the self-revelation or other self of the reality. Man is the microcosm in whom divine attributes are manifested in an imperfect form. God is eternal beauty, and the nature of beauty is self-manifestation and desire to be loved. The Sufis therefore base their doctrine on the principle of love, which they regard as the essence of all religions, and the cause of creation and contrived existence. In His absolute beauty God is called *Jamal*, and in his phenomenal he is called *Husn*. Among Muslim mystics, there are three stages of spiritual discipline. The

Sufi must discipline his mind by living in strict conformity with the Muslim creed and its rituals. All the rules of the Order must be strictly observed, and the next stage is *Marifat*, when the purified mind is illuminated with the divine knowledge. The third stage is *Haqiqat* when the Sufi sees the truth. The aim of the Sufi is self-purification, and ultimate absorption in the Beloved and it cannot be gained by self-endeavour. It is a divine gift, and God grants it to whomsoever He pleases. It is the duty of man to work for the Lord, until he vouchsafes it to Him. The Sufi feels that the purity of heart is far greater than rituals or ceremonials, and it is only by this method that truth can be realised by the devotee. Scholarship and research, mere knowledge and metaphysical profundity do not always enable a man to know the truth. The essentials for a true Sufi are self-discipline, adoration of the Lord, virtue and intention. When the Sufi comes to know God, the last stage is reached and the person is annihilated or absorbed in God, which is a new and eternal life. According to Hafiz, "He whose heart is moved by love, never dies." There are many points of contact between Muslim Sufis and Hindu followers of the Bhakti Movement. Mysticism is not confined to one country or religion, and transcends the bounds of race and religion. One could easily cite passages from the earlier European mystics, such as Plotinus, and later on, Jacob Boheme to show striking similarities between the doctrines of many of the Muslim Sufis. The *Bhagavat Gita* contains passages in which the basic features of the Sufi may be detected. Let me quote the following: "Merge thy Mind in Me, be my Bhakta, sacrifice to Me, pray to Me, thou shalt come to Me. Verily to thee I promise, thou will be dear to Me." "To the Devas go the worshippers of Devas, but my Devotees come unto Me." The methods of some of the Sufis are also suggested by the following from the *Gita*: "Holding the body, head and neck straight, steady and immovable, looking fixedly at the tip of his nose with unseeing gaze." "Having removed external contacts, gazing and fixing (the attention) between the eyebrows, and having made equal the outgoing and incoming breaths within the nostrils, with senses, mind and reason controlled and having cast desires (such as fear

and anger,) the *muni* (seeker of truth) always seeks liberation and is liberated."

*Al-Hajjaj.* Al-Hajjaj was one of the earliest Sufis of Iran. He was a profound student of philosophy, and held pronounced views on Sufism. Hajjaj was born in 858 A.D. in Southern Iran, and is said to have travelled in Central Asia, Gujarat, and Baghdad. His statements such as *An-a'l-Haqq*, i.e. I am the Truth, were denounced by the orthodox, and his political orthodoxy was also suspected. He was executed, after undergoing excruciating tortures, at the age of sixty-four, in 922 A.D. Hajjaj preached that the immaterial and immortal divine spirit becomes limited when it comes into contact with the animal soul that human intellect is singularly incapable of thinking or comparing the Supreme Being: that Union with Him is possible through submission to suffering and prayer may be replaced by other virtuous works.

*Sufi Orders.* A number of Sufi Orders were established in Iran, Baghdad, Samarkand, and India. It is impossible for me to enumerate even a few, as their number was not less than 175, but there were some which produced a profound effect on the community by their saintly lives and missionary fervour. The most famous were: (1) the Qadriya Order founded by "Abdu'l-Qadir of Gilan, North Iran. The followers of this Order are found all over the world. "Abdu'l Qadir of Gilan was born in 1078 A. D. and died in 1166 A. D. (2) Naqshabandi Order founded by Khwaja Baha'uddin Muhammed, who died in 1453. (3) Sannusiyya Order, founded in 1837 by Shaikh Muhammed, son of Ali Sannusi. The last named Order is a branch of the Qadriya Order and its followers are found in large numbers in North Africa. The Sannusis have become a great political force in North Africa, and the Order is now become semi-military in character, owing to ruthless persecution of its followers by Italians under the butcher Graziani in Cyrenaica, and Libya. Rosita Forbes has given a vivid account of the headquarters of this Order in one of her books.

*Prominent Sufis.* I will conclude this account with a brief reference to some of the great Sufis of Asia. Jalaluddin

expressed the tenets of Sufism in verse in a language of surpassing beauty. Rumi was born in 1207, and died in 1273. He was born in Balkh but wandered from his native place and went to west Iran and then journeyed to Syria. He finally settled in Qunya in Asia Minor. His *Masnavi* is one of the greatest mystic poems in the world, and expresses the Sufi tenets with an elegance and taste which have rarely been surpassed. The force generated by his work still continues, vital and expansive, in the spirit of the Muslim world. The poem was composed in six volumes, though there is a seventh volume which is declared by some scholars to be spurious. It contains nearly 48,000 verses and gives a comprehensive account of Sufism. The faiths and aspirations of Islam, and the ideals of mysticism which Rumi's *Masnavi* expounds are expressed with the intense sincerity which inspired Dante and Petrarch. To Rumi the new age of Culture, which appeared as a solvent through philosophical speculation, acted with a tremendous force and destructive energy on theological dogmas and the social life of his time. Several parts of this work have been translated in English by well-known English Orientalists, such as Redhouse and Professor R. A. Nicholson. Rumi believes that love is the highest virtue; it purifies the spiritual sentiments and gives us vision of the Supreme. He concedes that rituals and prayers are good, but the dwelling of the Beloved is not bounded by the walls of the mosque, temple or church. Its real dwelling is the pure heart. The real aim of man should be self-purification through faith and prayer. Evil is really in the creatures and not in the Creator, and man's chief idol is his animal soul. Man is very prone to see his evil reflected in other men and without removing evil from his mind and heart, he is eager to criticise it in others. Rumi's conception of free will is by no means free from ambiguity, as he admits that man is free, to a certain extent, but this freedom is subject to the Divine Will. He states that perfect love is perfect freedom, and this leads to the Union of human will with the Divine Will. The verses in which he describes love of the Supreme Being are couched in a language of exquisite beauty, and the poet seems inspired by the sacred theme which he describes with passionate fervour. The book begins with the lamen-

tation of the reed (soul) for its separation from the reed-bed (origin). The activity of the soul longs for union with God, and a man with such longing is like a bird without wings; it is achieved when the mirror of the heart is purified of passion. The real self is compared to the bright star of the light in the lamp, the glass through which the light shines, the carnal soul to the oil, they being the principles of life, while the sensation and voluntary movement and the body are compared to the niche. Jalaluddin holds with other Sufis that intellectual discipline and metaphysical arguments are inadequate means for knowing God. We can acquire knowledge of God by spiritual discipline, contemplation and purification of the heart, and devotion. Rumi's theory of human evolution is developed in verses in which are expressed the very life and soul of a mighty movement with the temper of the times impressed upon it, but with a truth and breadth that make it the image of every race and age. According to Rumi, man must go through a number of intermediate stages and forms until he attains perfection necessary for the soul, and he continues developing it until he has attained maximum development of his faculties. Rumi traces the progress of man from inorganic matter to the higher stages until he reaches the position occupied by man in the universe.

*Sufism in India.* India was one of the great centres of Sufism, and this was achieved mainly by saints and mystics, who put the impress of their personality on the age in which they lived. One of the greatest of Sufi saints of India was Muinuddin Chishti, who was born at Chisht in Seistan (Eastern Iran), and resided for a long time in Khorasan. He met a number of Sufi saints such as Abdul Qadir Jilani, and travelled extensively in Central Asia. Chisti followed the army of Ghoris in 1192, and settled at Ajmer in Rajasthan. A fair attended by hundreds and thousands of devotees is held at Ajmer every year. He had a succession of famous disciples, who were equally distinguished for their piety and learning. I need only mention Shaikh Fariduddin surnamed Shakarganj, who died at Pakpatan, and is venerated as a saint, and Nizamuddin Awliya who was the *Pir* of the celebrated Amir Khusraw. The Chishti Order declined, but



Nur Muhammed revived it towards the end of the eighteenth century. Bengal was converted mainly by a succession of *Peers* and *Maulvies* from Jaunpur in U. P.

*Decline of Sufism.* Sufism attained its greatest popularity in the Islamic world between the eleventh and thirteenth century. After this date, it rapidly declined. The early Sufis had emphasised piety and asceticism and had devoted particular attention to morality. They had not only preached, but also practised morality. Ethics occupied a supreme place in their system, as it was through self-abnegation and self-purification that union with God could be realised. However, here as elsewhere, a debased and discreditable form of casuistry was developed, which was devoted to the discussion of the nature of duty, sacrifice and conduct. Instead of practising the doctrines which had made the lives of early Sufis a model for others, the casuist specialised in raising doubts on the morality in practical life and the basic virtues were explained away by some misguided and hypocritical writers. An elaborate ritual was gradually introduced and the spiritual stream which had fertilised the mind and heart of millions soon dried up. Sufism, in some though, happily not in all cases, soon lost its fervour, and in the hands of some, it failed to maintain the highest standard of morals, and a number of illiterate and ignorant men took it up as an exceedingly easy and comfortable means of livelihood. There were, and are, happily, numerous exceptions from this rule, and we have at the present time a large number of pious men who have dedicated their lives to their sacred work. The other reasons for its decline are the advance of Europe in Asia, and the progress of Russia in Bukhara and Khiva, which had so far been the most powerful centres of Sufism in Asia. The original inspiration of Sufism had dried up, scholarship, poetry and painting had petrified, and scholastic philosophy, which had built up a new ideal of culture, had sunk into pedantry and logomachy. In short, the main motives supplied to art and religion by Sufism were worked out.

The Muslim Renaissance which reached its highest water-mark in the three centuries—11th to 13th—had created a critical spirit which penetrated every branch of art and letters. With the advance of the West in the sixteenth century, and the progress of Europe in every sphere of activity, Muslims stood no longer in a position of uncontested intellectual superiority to Europe, while they met it at a decided disadvantage at all points of political and military efficiency. At the end of the seventeenth century, Asia had ceased to be the high-road of literary enterprise and energy. While the peoples of Europe knew that illimitable vistas were opened by the advance of knowledge and discovery of the new world, and a new age had begun in France, Holland, England and Spain, Asia remained stationary and stagnant, with diminished powers of resistance to bear the intensified pressure of Europe's military efficiency, and industrial progress. Sufism, too, had lost its pristine purity and had degenerated into formalism and ceremonialism.

I would have liked to deal here with the development of Muslim scholasticism and jurisprudence, but this will take me too far afield, and I must content myself with the statement that Muslim scholasticism and Muslim jurisprudence were highly developed by the Muslims of Spain, Egypt, Persia, Samarkand, Bukhara and India. India became the centre of Muslim power and learning in the sixteenth century, and she maintained this position for nearly three centuries. Even now Muslim India can boast of a number of scholars learned in Arabic culture and theology who enjoy a world-wide reputation. India's devotion to Islamic culture and scholarship is expressed in a number of institutions for advanced studies which still exercise substantial influence throughout the Punjab, Bengal and U. P. and neighbouring countries.

Various theories have been propounded of the origin of the word "Sufi," but both Professor Browne and Professor Nicholson agree that the word Sufi is derived from the word "suf" or wool, as the Sufis generally wore simple woollen garments to mark their protest against the extravagant dress

of the period. Jami mentions in his *Nafahatul-Uns* that the word was first applied to Abu Hashim the Syrian, who died in 77 A. D.

*Sufism.* There are many theories on the origin of *Sufism*. The Sufis believe that their doctrines represent the esoteric doctrine of the Prophet, and quote certain verses from the *Quran*, such as the following "Thou didst not shoot when thou didst shoot, but God shot" (*Quran*, VIII, 17). The Prophet had enjoined a practical set of rules for the guidance of Muslims, and Islam discouraged the cruel mortification of the flesh and other austerities in which the Jewish, Essenes and Christian monks indulged. For a century after the Prophet's death, asceticism, and austerities were unknown in the world of Islam. Yet, as Goldziher has remarked, the first impulse to asceticism was given by an exaggerated consciousness of sin and the terrors of the Judgment Day which have been so vividly described in the *Quran*. Hasan of Basra seems to have been one of the earliest ascetics in Islam, and Sufis claim him as one of themselves. Ibn Khaldun's account of Sufism in his *Prologomena* may be quoted here:

"This is one of the religious sciences which were born in Islam. The way of the Sufis was regarded by ancient Moslems and their illustrious men the Companions of the Prophet (*al-Sahaba*), the successors (*al-Tabi'un*), and the generation which came after them as the way of Truth and salvation. To be assiduous in piety, to give up all else for God's sake, to turn away from worldly goods and vanities, to renounce pleasure, wealth, and power, which are the general objects of human ambition, to abandon society, and to lead in seclusion a life devoted solely to the service of God these were the fundamental principles of Sufism, which prevailed among the Companions and other Muslims of old time. When, however, in the second generation and afterwards worldly tastes became widely spread, and men no longer shrank from such contamination, those who made piety their aim were distinguished by the title of *Sufis* or *Mutasawwiffa* (aspirants to Sufism).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> See Nicholson, p. 229.

Another explanation of the origin of Sufism may be mentioned here. Sufism is, according to this theory, of Indian origin, as the advanced forms of Sufi doctrines resemble the Indian systems, especially the Vedanta Sara. It is contended that there must be a common origin of these two systems. There are many objections to this theory. In those days, there was little intercourse between Persia and India. Though there was exchange of ideas in the time of Nushirwan in the sixth century, no appreciable influence was exerted by India on the religious or social life of Persia. Muslims knew little of the Vedanta system till Al-Beruni gave an account of the geography, history and religion of India. There is no evidence of any other Muslim scholar of Sanskrit before Al-Beruni's time. When Al-Beruni published his work, the ideas of Sufis had crystallised into a powerful school of thought and the Vedanta Sara could not therefore influence the Sufi doctrine.

Von Kremer has shown that the later development of Sufism was influenced by the Vedanta system. This is highly probable and has special application to India, where the Bhakti movement greatly influenced Indian Sufism.

Another theory is that Sufism is an expression of Persia's national genius, and it may have developed in Sassanian times. We have no positive evidence on the subject. Some of the most famous Sufis were, however, Arabs, such as Sheikh Muhiyuddin ibn-Aarabi and Ibn-ul-Farid (A. H. 123-5), who exercised great influence on Persian Sufis such as Iraqi, and later, Jami (1492-93 A. D.), Professors R. A. Nicholson and Browne hold that Sufism is a spontaneous phenomenon which has recurred in all countries and climes, and is an expression of the natural desire of the human mind to concern itself with the problems of the wherefore, the when and wither of the Spirit. It is probable that it is more indebted to Neo-Platonism than to any other system. The Neo-Platonic doctrines were familiar to Muslims in the nineteenth century A. D. and it has already been pointed out in this book that Muslim philosophers were keen students of Neo-

Platonic philosophy which they combined with the study of some of Aristotle's writings. Professor Browne quotes Bouillet's remarks in his translation of Plotinus.

*Enneads.* There is kinship between certain ideas of Plotinus and the doctrines of Oriental mysticism. Plotinus' *Enneads* was studied by Syrians when the Arabs conquered Syria, and Arab philosophy will be meaningless to us unless we take into account the enormous influence which Plotinus exercised on Arab thought for centuries.

Another explanation of the origin of Sufism may be hazarded here. Sufism may have developed spontaneously, and the early Sufis may have independently expressed the natural desire of sensitive folk for communion with the Unseen. As Sufism crystallised later on into a definite system with its own ritual, it borrowed many ideas from Plotinus, and other schools of thought.

Al-Ghazali has given in his *Munqidh-mina' ad-Dalal* an account of his spiritual travail, and shows how after the study of various sects, such as the Ismailis, Mutazilites, etc. "the bond of blind conformity was loosed from me, and the beliefs which I had inherited were broken away when I was little more than a boy." Leaders of orthodoxy, both Shia and Sunni, were opposed to Sufism, because of its eclectic doctrines, and it was only Ghazali's powerful personality and brilliant intellect which induced the orthodox to accept Sufism within its fold.

*Ibn-Adham.* The utterances of early Sufis such as Ibrahim bin Adham, (777-8 A. D.) reflect only quietism combined with wit, asceticism, and intimate love of God. But with Sufis like Abu Yazid of Bislam, and Junayd of Baghdad, we have the first visible influence of pantheism. Abu Yazid once declared, "Verily I am God, there is no God but me; therefore worship me." Junayd was also a thorough-going pantheist by the tongue of Junayd, though Junayd was no longer there, and men knew it not."

*Al-Hallaj*. According to *Fibrist*, Al-Hallaj was "an ignorant, pushing, headstrong fellow, overbold against authority, meddling in high matters, eager to subvert governments, claiming divinity amongst his disciples, preaching the Doctrine of Incarnation, pretending to kins that he was of the Shia, and to the common folk, that held the opinions of the Sufis, claiming that the Deity had become incarnate in Him, and that He was God."<sup>55</sup>

Tabari declares that after being arrested in the course of his wanderings, the wazir of the Caliph Al-Muqtadir found him totally ignorant of the *Quran* and the science of jurisprudence, poetry and philology. He was originally one of the missionaries of Ali-ar-Riaz, the eighth Imam of the sect of the Twelve, and was punished for heresy in Persia. Browne gives a detailed account of Al-Hallaj from a number of authorities. The estimates of the man's character differ. Fariduddin Attar speaks of him as "that Martyr of God in the way of God, that Lion of the Thicket of the Search after Truth, and Diver in the Tempetuous Sea," and praises his character and attainments. Even Ghazali in his *Mishkatul Anwar* excuses him for his failings. However, other writers charge him with intriguing under the revolutionary sect of the Carmathians. He was said to have visited India to learn the rope trick. Arib says that "grievous were his calumnies against God and His disciples." He would say to a disciple, "Thou art Noah," to another, "Thou art Moses" to a third, "Thou art Muhammad" adding, "I have caused their spirits to return to your bodies." His end was tragic. He was scourged with a thousand stripes; his hands and feet were cut off, he was then put to death and his body burnt alive.<sup>56</sup>

The Sufi system emphasises not only True Being, but also Beauty and Goodness as God's attributes. The greatest Sufi poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, has given the ablest and the most graceful exposition of the Sufi doctrines in his *Masnawi*.

<sup>55</sup> Browne, Vol. 1, pp. 428-429.

<sup>56</sup> Browne, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 428-436.



I quote here a passage from Professor Browne's version in his article of Sufism published in *The Religious Systems of the World*.

"Whatever heart

Doth yield to love, He charms it. In his love  
The heart hath life. Longing for him, the soul  
Hath victory. That heart which seems to love  
The fair ones of this world loves Him alone.  
Beware "Say not, 'He is All-Beautiful,  
And we His lovers : "Thou art but the glass,  
And He the Face confronting it which casts  
Its image in the mirror. He alone  
Is manifest, and thou in truth art hid.  
Pure Love, like Beauty, coming but from Him,  
Reveals itself in thee. If steadfastly  
Thou canst regard, thou wilt at length perceive  
The treasure and the Casket 'I' and 'Thou'  
Have here no place, and are but phantasies,  
Vain and unreal" (c. f. *Browne*, Vol. 1, p. 439)

*Place of Love in Sufism.* Sufis regard love as the sovereign alchemy, which transmutes humanity's mortal clay into divine essence. Jami expresses it beautifully in the following lines :

"Though in this world a hundred tasks thou tryest,  
"Tis Love alone which from thyself will save thee.  
Even from earthly love thy face avert not,  
Since to the Real it may serve raise thee.  
Ere, A, B, C, are rightly apprehended,  
How canst thou con the pages of the *Quran* ?  
A sage (so heard I) unto whom a scholar  
Came craving counsel on the course before him,  
Said, "If thy steps be strangers to Love's pathways,  
Depart, learn love, and then return before me.'  
For, should'st thou fear to drink wine from Form's flagon,  
Thou canst not drain the draughts of the ideal.  
But yet beware : Be not by Form belated ;

Strive rather with all speed the bridge to traverse,  
 If to the bourne thou fain would'st bear thy baggage;  
 Upon the bride let not thy footsteps linger."

Women, too, were among them and it is possible that to their influence, a development of devotional love-poetry was due. At least, many verses of this kind are ascribed to a certain Rabia, an ascetic and ecstatic devotee of the most extreme otherworldliness, who died in 135 A.H. Many other women had part in the contemplative life. Among them may be mentioned, to show its grasp and spread, Aisha, daughter of Jafar-as-Sadiq, who died in 145; Fatima of Naysabur, who died in 323, and the Lady Nafisa, a contemporary and rival in learning with Ash Shafi and the marvel of her time in piety and the ascetic life. Her grave is one of the most venerated spots in Cairo, and at it wonders are still worked and prayer is always answered. She was a descendant of Al-Hasan, the martyred ex-Khalifa, and an example of how the family of the Prophet was an early school for women saints. Even in the Heathenism we have traces of female penitents and hermits; and the tragedy of Ali and his sons and descendants gave scope for the self-sacrifice, loving service and religious enthusiasm with which women are dowered.

All these stood and stand in Islam on exactly the same footing as men. The distinction in Roman Christendom that a woman cannot be a priest falls away, for in Islam there is neither priest nor laymen. They lived either as solitaries or in conventional life exactly as did the men. They were Sufiyas beside the Sufis; Zahidas (ascetics) beside the Zahids; Waliyas (friends of God) besides the Wallis; Abidas (devotees) beside the Abids. They worked wonder (*karamat*, closely akin to the *Xaptojuata* of 1 Cor. XII, 9) by the divine grace, and still as we have seen, at their own graces such are granted through them to the faithful, and their intercession (*shafas*) is invoked. Their religious exercises were the same they held *dhikirs* and women *darwishes* yet dance to singing and music in order to bring on fits of ecstasy. To state the case generally, whatever is said hereafter of mysticism and its workings among them must be taken as applying to women also.

## CHAPTER II

### DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL SCIENCES AMONG THE ARABS

This is not a sketch of the literary and scientific activity of Muslims, as even a brief account will occupy a large amount of space. Those who wish to study the subject further should consult a number of monographs on the subject. I conclude here with an exceedingly brief account of the scientific activity of the Arabs. The Arabs were noted as historians, and one of the earliest historians of the Prophet, Ibn Hisham, edited Ibn Ishaq's life of the Prophet with copious notes. Waqidi's *History of the Companions of the Prophet* gives us a connected, coherent work, in a lively style. The course of historical activities was gradually widened, and Ibn Kutaiba's *Kitabul Ma'arif* (Book of Knowledge), gives us most useful information on the history of Islam. The Arabs had a passion for historiography and geography, and they studied the antiquities, archaeology traditions, and social conditions, not merely of Muslim, but also of non-Muslim countries. The study of history led to the study of archaeology, geography, ethnography, and other sciences.

Baladhuri's *History of Muslim Conquests* is an objective account of the conquests of Muslims, and has been translated into English. The Arab school of history which developed at Baghdad produced works which were distinguished for their scientific spirit and profound study of data. Two great scholars may be mentioned here, Masudi and Al-Biruni. Masudi was a great geographer and traveller, and visited many countries. He visited India, and was for a long time at Bombay. He seems to have travelled in farther India, and is said to have visited China also. He wrote numerous works on astronomy, geography and history and is called the Arab Herodotus. After the accession of Buhayyids to power, Arab culture began to decline.

*Arab Geographers.* Masudi was one of the greatest geographers of the world, and his comprehensive account of lands of the Caliphate is invaluable to us. *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* is a storehouse of information for the provinces of the Caliphate, and is based on the works of Arab geographers and historians. Knowledge of geography played an important part in the administration. The officials of the Caliphs prepared useful hand-books for official use and Ibn Khurdadhbīn wrote an official itinerary which was highly appreciated. Qudama's itinerary dealt exhaustively with the provinces of the Caliphate and gave details of revenue, etc. There was an eager curiosity among Arabs of all classes to see the world, and the accounts of travellers which have come down to us are a storehouse of information for the scientist, the historian and the anthropologist. One example will suffice.

Ibn Hawkal who lived about 366 A. H. spent twenty-eight years in travel, to qualify himself for the task of editing Istakhri. Maqdisi who wrote in 375 A. H. was the greatest of them all. Sprenger is of the opinion that there is no geographer who travelled so widely, observed so acutely, and collected and used his materials so well, according to plan. The account of his wanderings in strange lands makes fascinating reading, and he seems to have visited every Muslim country. Another great scientist and traveller was Yakut, who was Greek by birth, and was born about 574 A. H. The absorbingly interesting account of this great geographer shows that the Muslim zeal for learning and truth inspired some of the best intellects of the time. Mak-kari has given a special chapter, in his *History of the Arabs in Spain*, in which he gives an account of travellers who travelled in the East, bore all the dangers and discomforts of travelling in those disturbed times, and regarded their work as an act of piety. The knowledge of geography which these travels yielded is of the highest importance to science.

It is the considered opinion of many scientists that the Arabs made probably greater contribution to mathematical studies than ancient Greeks. Algebra owed its development

to Arabs whose devotion to astronomy was the necessary result of their proficiency in mathematics. Sedilott has written two brilliant works on the contribution of Arabs to science. One deals with their contribution to the history of mathematical sciences and the other traces their history. The sketch which I have attempted in this book is based almost entirely on Kremer's second volume of his *Cultural History*, of which four chapters have been translated by S. Khuda Baksh in his *Studies: Indian and Islamic*. The knowledge of Algebra in Europe was based on an elementary work on Algebra which had been compiled by Khwarizimy in the reign of Caliph Mamun (about 280 A. H.). Arabs also developed the science of Geometry, specially the development of spherical Trigonometry. They used the sine of the arc, instead of the Chord of twice the arc, in the eleventh century A. D. They made notable contributions in optics, and Makkari tells us that a Spanish mechanic invented a machine, in which he actually flew into the air. Ibn Hazan's contributions are specially significant. He was correct in his theories of vision, and refraction of light, the position of the image produced by curved mirrors and the seeming dimensions of objects. Ibn Hazan proved that the refraction of a ray of light increases with the increasing density of the atmosphere; he also determined approximately the height of the layer of air surrounding the Earth.

*Progress of Astronomy.* The Arabs specially distinguished themselves in astronomical researches. Khwarizimy prepared an abridged edition of Indian Astronomical Tables (*Siddhanta*) which had been translated by Fazari. Fazari was a Jewish convert to Islam, and was Mamun's Astronomer royal and superintendent of observatories. They had also begun to study Ptolemy, and made independent investigation of their own. The indefatigable Mamun ordered a revision of the astronomical tables of Ptolemy, and the revised tables were based on observations made in the observatories of Baghdad and Damascus. The tables of Ptolemy were corrected; the changes in the apogee of the Sun were ascertained; obliquity of the ellipse was determined with precision, and the length of the equinoxes enabled them

to fix the length of the year. Al-Farghani was known throughout Europe as Alfraganus and the fame of his astronomical researches resounded throughout Europe. Spanish Arabs were no less distinguished for astronomical investigations. Sedillot declares, "What characterised this school of Baghdad from its inception was its scientific spirit. Proceeding from the known to the unknown . . . accepting nothing as true which was not confirmed by experience or established by experiment such were the fundamental principles taught and proclaimed by the then masters of the sciences "Till the end of the seventeenth century, the privilege of Arabic was combined with proficiency in astronomy." The astronomer royal of the Netherlands, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, was both an Arabic scholar and an astronomer.

Astronomical studies made great strides at Baghdad under the Buyyids and Moors in Spain. Asafuddowlah was a great friend and patron of astronomy and gave a great impetus to scientific research. The astronomers Kuhy and Abul Wafa Buzgani surpassed all their predecessors. They constructed costly instruments for their enquiries, and a quadrant was constructed which had a radius of thirty feet, and another astronomer constructed a sextant with a radius of eighty feet. The cost of such instruments was very high. The Russian Academy published in 1874 the list of fixed stars which had been compiled by Abdul Rahman-al Sufi in the reign of the Buyyid Sultan Asafuddowlah.

The great astronomer Abul Wafa, who was born at Buzgan in 939 A. D. and is therefore called Buzgani, made epoch-making discoveries in astronomy; Sedillot states that Abul Wafa, in his researches into Ptolemy's studies of the moon, discovered besides the centre-equator and evection, a third inequality which is the variation, determined by Tycho Brahe six centuries later. This is, however, disputed by experts. The school of astronomy at Baghdad in the tenth and eleventh centuries carried researches of the highest order and greatly enlarged the knowledge of heavenly phenomena. Interest in astronomy was maintained even in the turmoil and confusion which followed incessant political revolutions during the period. One of the most



famous was Nasiruddin Tusi, who founded an observatory at Maragha, and Ulugh Beg, the last of the race of Arab astronomers, who established an observatory at Samarkand.

The astronomical school of Cairo followed in the footsteps of the Baghdad school and some of them such as Ibn Yunus, a pupil of Abul Wafa, made new discoveries, evolved new methods, constructed new instruments and prepared Astronomical Tables of great importance.

Arab astronomers in Spain carried on the tradition of the Baghdad school. I need only mention the names of Arzakei, Maslama, Majariti and Averroes. The manufacture of new instruments kept pace with astronomical investigations. Beruni used a quadrant of fifteen cubits. They prepared spheres, astrolabes and other instruments. The astrolabes proved indispensable to seamen, were in constant use in Europe till the seventeenth century, and were made at Baghdad and at Cairo. The study of astrology was also assiduously pursued, and the energy of some of the minds of the age was spent on this pastime. The influence of stars upon the Earth and the destiny of man was keenly studied. In the same way, the study of Chemistry degenerated into the study of alchemy. However, devotion to alchemy led to deeper knowledge of minerals and metals. The Middle Ages came to know of alchemy through the Arabs, though the Roman Emperor Caligula is said to have attempted to make some gold. The Arabs greatly admired pharmaceutical knowledge, and an important work by the Persian, Abu Mansur Muwaffak at the end of the tenth century, remained authoritative for centuries. In it Muwaffak incorporated results of his studies of Greek pharmacy, and though the work was intended mainly for medical practitioners it was of interest to chemists also. Unfortunately, Arab chemistry made no progress, for nearly two centuries, as mysticism played havoc with science, as it played in other spheres of mental energy. Just as mysticism destroyed the foundations of rationalism and empirical philosophy its influence on scientific enquiry proved disastrous.

*Chemistry.* The views of the chemist Jabir Ibn Hayyan commanded homage throughout the Middle Ages. On the whole it must be admitted that the Arabs did not make many important discoveries in Chemistry. Their chief merit lies in developing the scientific method, and collecting a large amount of data. The same remarks apply to medicine. Religion forbade them to dissect dead bodies, and one of the most important sources of investigation was thereby closed. They based their system entirely on Galen, and it is supreme in many Muslim countries. The Arab system of medicine was not, however, wholly based on the Greek system, for they made many discoveries particularly in pharmacy, where they made notable advances. Rhazes was a colossus and his contributions to medical science are substantial. In surgery, too, he made a great advance on the Greeks, and his work on smallpox is a classic.

Ali Ibn Abbas Majusi, the Persian, is another notable figure, who wrote a comprehensive encyclopaedia in the reign of Sultan Adad-ud-Dowlah. The greatest of all is Ibn Sina, who maintained his supremacy in Europe for six centuries. His system is dominant in southern Asia to the present day.

"The Arab has impressed his intellectual stamp upon Europe, and not in too remote a future will Christendom concede this truth. He has left unfading traces of his fingers on the sky which everyone can see who reads the names of the stars on an ordinary celestial globe."<sup>57</sup>

*Other sciences.* The Arabs did not study botany, mineralogy or zoology systematically. In botany they collected facts with exemplary patience, and they did grasp the physiological and philosophical aspects of the plant. According to Meyer's work on the history of Botany they outstripped the ancients in the number and the extent of their collections, and in the skill and precision with which they made their observations.

*Zoology.* Here, again, the Arabs failed to systematise their knowledge and relying mainly on Aristotle, collected

<sup>57</sup> Draper, *Intellectual Development of Europe*, Vol. II, Chapter XVI.

a mass of unorganised material on the subject. Their division of animals into classes is exceedingly crude.

They were more successful in Mineralogy. Special mention should be made here of Al-Beruni's theory of specific gravity. He determined the specific gravity of nine metals and nine precious stones. His results agree with the researches of European scholars.

The above sketch shows conclusively the importance of Arab contribution to science. After the decline of Greece and Rome, it was the Arabs who kept the torch of learning burning brightly in the Middle Ages, and but for their devotion to scholarship, Europe would have wasted centuries on trying to rediscover the learning of the ancients. I have not dealt here with the development of Arab grammar and literature as it is a vast subject, and I do not feel competent to deal with it. I have, however, given specimens of Arab poetry in various parts of this work to convey to the reader an idea of the extraordinary range and scope of Arabic language and literature.

## SECTION III

### CHAPTER 12

## MUSLIM CULTURE IN INDIA

I will now deal with the work of Islam in the material sphere, and will confine myself to India. I cannot deal with this subject, without an analysis of the forces that inspired Muslims in other countries. The Muslim conquerors of India kept up cultural intercourse with their brethren in distant countries, and India in those days was part of the great Muslim fraternity which stretched from the Hoogly in the East to Tangier, Granada and Cordova in Spain. The great Islamic brotherhood was knit together by bonds of a common faith, and commercial, spiritual and cultural intercourse was incessant. The Muslim sovereigns of India were distinguished for their patronage of art and scholarship, and a famous Muslim scholar or divine from Baghdad would sometimes be invited to the courts of Indian kings.

*India's Unique Position in World Culture.* India's position in the world of culture was unique. She had established, her claim as the spiritual leader of China and the Far East, and firmly established her conquest over the mind and heart of China, Burma, Siam, Malaya, etc. by the devotion and fervour of her missionaries and peaceful traders. As a protection against the vicissitudes of foreign invasions of her soil, she developed a vigorous spiritual life, and her spiritual heritage was preserved by precious unguents from the corruption and injury of time. In the wake of spiritual revolution followed a system of philosophy, which facilitated the recovered energy and freedom of the reason. At a time when superstition had interposed a veil between the human soul and God, and freedom of conscience had not yet been established, India took the lead in the progressive evolution of the human spirit which marked her off from the rest of mankind. India was then, as she is now, the meeting point of two cultures. While she was united by the strongest

ties with the Buddhist countries of the Far East, and her cultural contact with China and the Far East was constant, she was deeply influenced by Muslim countries of the Middle East by the indissoluble ties of a common culture and religion. Her Muslim rulers were animated by a feeling for cultural and religious progress which found its fullest expression in the great centres of learning in Persia, Samarkand, Delhi, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova and Granada. Persia developed her own language as early as the ninth century and a succession of brilliant poets and scholars headed by Firdawsi, the most distinguished poet of Persia, soon built up a solid structure of Persian language and culture. Eastern Persia became the home of Muslim philosophers, poets and theologians and Persia produced a profound influence on India. Every educated Muslim learnt the classical languages, Persian and Arabic, and Persian remained the Court language of India till 1834. In other countries, too, such as Samarkand and Bukhara, Baghdad and Cairo, the Renaissance gathered force and momentum, until it reached its fullest development in Cordova. For a true understanding of Muslim culture, it is therefore essential to regard its progress in these centres of learning as part of an organic development. The pattern of Muslim culture in Delhi and Cordova, Samarkand and Baghdad, or in Teheran and Meshed was the same, as they were animated by the same religious conceptions, and cultural ideals. A belief in the identity of the Islamic spirit and the unity of Muslim culture, in its previous manifestations and in its uninterrupted continuity, was generated. The Muslim scholar of Delhi was at home in the cultured atmosphere of Cairo and the regal splendour of the Alhambra. While Hindu culture had served as an everlasting solace to the human spirit, Muslim culture emphasised the power over the outer world which the positive sciences, and the human sciences, such as history, geography and ethnology, communicate. The one developed spiritual and intellectual culture to heights which seem incredible to us at the present day, while the other opened for investigation and development the critical and inquisitive genius of Muslim rulers and statesmen. India was then, as it is now, the focal point of

Asia, and radiated influences which connected her with China and the Far East on the one hand, and Muslim countries from Bengal to Muslim Spain on the other hand.

*Influence of Islam on Hindu Culture and Institutions.* The wave of Muslim invasions began in the seventh century, and continued for nearly a thousand years, till 1707, when the last great Mughal emperor died. From the time of our national king, the great Akbar, it was clear that this mighty land was to be the homeland of two great religions of the world—Hinduism and Islam. Islam in India transformed Indian society and culture in a way which is hardly recognisable at the present day. It is impossible for me to give even the barest record of the political history of the time. While politically India was most vulnerable, spiritually and culturally she remained powerful and was still the freest and most gifted of Asia's daughters. It is true that before the Muslim invasion, there hung the shadow of political stagnation and economic disintegration. However, she found an anodyne in the charm of a vigorous spiritual life, and concentrated on the development of her distinctive culture with all the devotion and self-sacrifice of a race that is denied effective participation in public life of its homeland. While the chief contribution of ancient India was in the sphere of the spiritual and the internal, Islam contributed to the solution of problems of practical administration, and wisely retained the foundations upon which the structure of Indian administration had hitherto rested. The village organisation, and other institutions continued to function vigorously and were incorporated in the Mughal system. Islam attempted in the political sphere what Hinduism had achieved in the spiritual. Before the Muslims came to India, Hinduism had successfully absorbed the culture and civilisation of numerous races and creeds, and being a potent and life-penetrating organism, the secret of its assimilation of religious and cultural conceptions of other races could not be reduced to rule. It created, transmitted and continually modified its tradition of policy. This was a biological function which every living society performs and it is the flame which breathes life into every organism through cen-



turies of organic activity. What Hinduism achieved on the spiritual plane, Islam realised in the temporal sphere. While the culture of Hinduism during the period when it was politically inarticulate failed to make striking changes in the material sphere, Islam assimilated the modes and traditions, customs and conventions of practical administration and statesmanship, and built up a structure of administration which endured for centuries, and is the foundation of the present-day Indian administration. It adapted the institutions current at the time to the needs of a changing world, and fortified and adorned their rule, built good laws, good arms, good friends and good examples. This is clear from the administrative reforms of the great Akbar. He overhauled the revenue system, reformed the district administration, and introduced many important changes in the Indian arms.

Islam soon adapted indigenous institutions to a changed society, and developed a new conception of citizenship. It substituted human for spiritual authority, suggested fresh channels for energy, and finally repudiated all authority that had been interposed between human reason and the universe. The Muslims achieved for India the transition from the ancient to the modern world. In all the institutions they created they dispensed with chance, smiled incredulously at fortune, and explained all social and political phenomena by reference to the will and thought of man in action. They studied the man as they found it, and succeeded because they legislated for the common man, the man who is ultimately the pillar of society, and instinctively obeys the law of morality. Their positive spirit leavened society before able Muslim historians gave it the consistency of demonstration. The realism on which Muslim administration was founded was rationalised. The ancient period with its magnificent tradition of spirituality was at an end, and the new positivists who were inspired alike by the ideal of service to God and man, set up canons of art, science and administration, which were regarded at the time as revolutionary. The spirit commemorated by Muslim historians and scientists is the spirit of modern thought. Muslim culture gave laws to medieval India in language, literature, fine arts, poetry,

historiography and administration. Without Muslim culture, it is improbable that India would have taken the place of the proud pre-eminence she held in Asia in the seventeenth century. The Mughal Empire never achieved the military greatness of Turkey under her national ruler, Sulaiman the Magnificent. However, in the realm of scholarship, fine arts and statesmanship she achieved a position in the hierarchy of Asian nations which may legitimately be regarded as supreme. Indian culture of this period owes almost everything to the creative genius of the first six Mughal emperors. Their records are all positive and detailed, and they have left an amount of material for the study of their reigns which has not yet been explored. Fresh material is constantly discovered in numerous libraries throughout India. The administrative stability which formed the secret of their strength was also the source of their intellectual mobility and exquisite taste. We may contrast here the self-conscious, variable and cultivated intellect of the Persian, with the solid repose and stable government of the Mughals of this period. In the time of Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jehan, there was incessant change and a highly developed political and cultural consciousness. Eminent men played a distinguished part at these courts, and the genius of these individuals was even stronger than the character of the state. Some of the painters represented India as a beautiful queen receiving the homage of her subjects and the world. In the past, metaphysical speculation had absorbed the mind and thought of India for centuries and the problems of the eternal had left little time for the development of social activity, or for the organisation of a powerful state. Islam transferred India's spiritual energy to the sphere of material development and administrative vigour.

*Love of Spiritualism.* At this time, the thought of the next world monopolised the mind of man, and few cared to enquire if the other world gave reality and meaning to human life on earth. Men's eyes were fixed at the beyond, at first with an immediate expectation of the judgment, afterwards, with a continued looking forward to Paradise, or as the case may be, incarnation. The attitude towards

eternity was an absorbing preoccupation. However, with the coming of the new age, life on earth acquired a new meaning to man. While the old beliefs continued to be held with the tenacity of physical growth, and men gladly sacrificed their lives to vindicate the truth, the emphasis was shifted to the problems of the immediate present in a world of fierce conflict and desperate struggle. They became eager to conquer, to change the structure of society, to show that reason could break loose from its fetters, and man, by use of nature, could reconstruct society. There were, however, even in this period, a few persons, who tired of the confusion and disorder which they saw around them, and of the restrictions imposed upon their nature by the prospect of futurity were intent on probing into the secrets of the Ultimate Reality. Theories which had been neglected or despised, as they did not explain the nature of the soul, according to the accepted canons of metaphysics which had so far been regarded as foes of faith, were at all times accepted as a bulwark, and were used as an efficient battering ram against the castles of orthodox opinion. In the case of highly gifted nations of Asia, during this period of swift changes, many persons were inclined with an overmastering bias towards materialism on the one hand and soulless rationalism on the other. Muslim culture in India, however, fundamentally changed these conceptions and imparted to man as a social being qualities which had hitherto lain dormant among the masses of the people. Froude has remarked that a momentous change came in the sixteenth century upon the world whose significance was lost upon the ordinary man. The paths trodden by the footsteps of ages were broken up, and the faith and life of hundreds of races and creeds was dissolving like a mist on the mountain-top. While many nations of Asia and Europe could, at this time, barely do more than gain and keep a difficult hold on existence, and had remained in the same fabric of habit and custom for centuries, the leaders of the new revival in Asia and Europe, whose physical and mental faculties had remained unimpaired, inaugurated the modern world, and made art and administration the exponent of the majesty and splendour of the human body and of body-politic. In the eyes of the scientists and philosophers

who represented the new spirit of enquiry, the earth itself, unfixed from its foundations, now appeared to be a small atom in the infinite expanse of the universe. A new world of thought and feeling based on ideas that were originally religious was revealed to the astonished eyes of the reformers. Yet these men, in their headstrong fury, never forgot the discipline of religion to which they were accustomed.

*India on the eve of Muslim Invasion.* India before Muslim invasions was destitute of a vigorous national leader, who could centralise her energy, and achieve national unity. She was hopelessly divided into a number of weak and impotent states, each practically independent of the other, and all of them incapable of developing the conception of a united state as something possessed of organic vitality. India as an entity had disappeared altogether, and its place was taken by fragments of jarring creeds and dynastic arrogance. Centralisation alone could have averted the invasion of the soil. It may be admitted that even during this period, the struggles of the princes for supremacy, the internecine wars of dynasty against dynasty, and the never-ending clash of principles within the states, educated the people to multifarious and vivid energy. Yet in none of these long and interminable struggles did the chief theatres of dynasty, class and family warfare acquire separate personality, assume the physiognomy of a truly national state, or stamp the mark of its own exclusive spirit on its citizens. As a result of these demoralising influences, and the repetition of exhausting discords, we find inflexible and rigid elements in India, in the years 700-1200 which became inassimilable, and lost the consciousness of a common origin and common culture. The essential characteristic of this period is diversity, uncontrolled by the common bond of patriotism, and sundered by memories of bitter feud and petty jealousies. In a stable state, diversity lends colour and spice to national life, and creates centres of activity, artistic as well as political, which serve as a source of perennial energy, and are the climax and perfection of a truly national government. All of them are fused beneath the stress of external danger into a nation that survives political muta-

tions, and lose the outlines of their several personalities in a vigorous federated state. Diversity in such cases, is controlled and harmonised by an ideal rhythm of progressive movement and national unity. The genius of each of these centres expresses itself in society, scholarship, fine art and literature at its most brilliant period of renaissance. The vigorous mental life of Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century, no less than the free virility of Switzerland, are excellent examples of federalism in culture and administration. We owe the unexampled mental life of the constituent elements of these two countries to the variety of political and social conditions which existed among them. India, too, had developed vigorous centres which vibrated with energy and maintained the tradition of intellectual supremacy for centuries. Yet it must be confessed that the diversities which stimulated this spiritual energy were a source of political instability. The ancient landmarks were altered and confused, and though the population everywhere emerged and displayed wonderful vitality against foreign foes, and showed great recuperative power in the period of Muslim conquest, it was clear that her preoccupation with the problem of eternity, no less than disunity and divisions in her councils, facilitated her conquest. She was incapable of organising the various elements of her strength, and her freedom melted imperceptibly away. The least stirrings of their special energy brought strength into Muslim forces which proved stronger than the forces of the weak kingdoms of India.

I have given, I am afraid, too long an account of the condition of India before the Muslim invasion, as I am not sure that this period has received adequate attention from historians. They have left the dark period alone but have given detailed and laborious accounts of India's invaders from the north-west. The causes of the rapid conquest of India are to be found in the enormous energy which the Muslim conquerors infused into the conquest of this land. They came with a faith in which enthusiasm for religion played a supreme part, and combined material ardour with religious fervour in a way which carried everything before it.



*Akbar's Institutions.* Having dealt with the condition of India before the Muslim conquest, let me give a brief account of one of the greatest rulers that India has produced. I refer, of course, to Akbar. Historians of all nations agree in thinking that Emperor Akbar was one of the greatest rulers the world has known, and he combined in his person, qualities which few great monarchs have exhibited. If we compare Akbar with his contemporaries, we find that he towered above all of them in intellect, in character and achievement. The sixteenth century was an era of great kings. Pope Leo X, Emperor Charles V, Henry IV of France and Elizabeth of England were among the ablest rulers of the world. Akbar's reign was contemporary with that of Elizabeth, and few monarchs have used their opportunity with such wisdom and magnanimity as Akbar. "An almost equal sympathy with the speculations of all religions, a deep understanding and admiration of the old Indian system, with a desire only to complete and extend, never to nullify it, a love of everything that was national, with a habit of striking swiftly and pardoning generously—all these qualities gave Akbar a place in the hearts of his subjects which make Secundara a sufficient name to this day."<sup>18</sup> Here is the estimate of this great king by his son Emperor Jehangir, in his *Memoirs*: "My father always associated with the learned of every creed and religion, especially the Pundits and the learned of India. Notwithstanding his kingship, his treasures and his buried wealth, his fighting elephants and Arab horses, he never by a hair's breadth placed his foot beyond the base of humility before the throne of God, and never for one moment forgot Him. He associated with the good of every race and creed and persuasion, and was gracious to all in accordance with their condition and understanding. He passed his nights in wakefulness and slept little in the day. The length of his sleep during the whole night was not more than a watch and a half." Stanley Lane-poole, the historian of the Mughal Empire, says that "Akbar was the ablest king that ever ruled in India." Thompson and Garrett state, "Akbar has proved



his worth in different fields of action. He was an intrepid soldier, a great general, a wise administrator, a benevolent ruler and a sound judge of character. He was a born leader of men and can rightly claim to be one of the mightiest men known to history. During a reign of nearly fifty years, he built up a powerful empire which vied with the strongest, and established a dynasty whose hold over India was not contested by a rival for almost a century." Finally, let me quote Vincent Smith, "Akbar was a born king of men, with a rightful claim to be one of the mightiest sovereigns known to history."

Akbar's claim to fame rests securely on the basis of his extraordinary natural gifts, his creative energy, and his dazzling achievements. He was the first to conceive the unity of India and he accomplished it by elaborate organisation and still more by the settled policy which persuaded his subjects of the justice of their ruler. Though a foreigner, he identified himself with the India he had conquered. And much of this system was to be permanent. Akbar's weaknesses—and they were many—were no less engaging than his strong points, and all of them endeared him to the heart of his subjects. The German historian, Count Von Noer, wrote a detailed account of Emperor Akbar's administration, which showed for the first time to Europe as a whole, the splendour of our culture, and the stability of our administration. Since then Akbar has claimed the attention of some of the most brilliant historians of India and England. In a most interesting novel entitled *The Root and Flower* by Leo Myers, Akbar's reign is graphically described. Curiously enough, the more Akbar's character and policy are studied, the greater is the fascination which he exercises over us at the present time. With all his greatness, the Emperor was essentially human and he generously forgave his enemies. His magnanimity was proverbial, and few enemies asked for mercy in vain. There is something pathetic in the desire of the great ruler to solve the riddle of the universe and probe the mysteries of eternity. He was deeply interested in the Parsi religion no less than in Christianity, while his sympathy with his Hindu subjects was widely known and greatly appreciated. Akbar would move

restlessly from sect to sect in quest of the unknown, and would listen to the profound metaphysical discourse of the Brahman, as well as to the exposition of the Jain, Parsi and Catholic creeds by the leaders of these religions. I will conclude this account of the great ruler with the following quotation from Tennyson's magnificent poem, *Akbar's Dream*.

### AKBAR'S DREAM

Akbar to Abu-l Fazl (before the palace at Fatehpur Sikri at night).

"But come,

My noble friend, my faithful counsellor,  
 Sit by my side while thou art one with me,  
 I seem no longer like a lonely man  
 In the King's Garden, gathering here and there  
 From each fair plant the blossom choicest grown  
 To wreath a crown not only for the King,  
 But in due time for every Musalman,  
 Brahmin, Buddhist, Christian and Parsee,  
 Thro' all the warring world of Hindustan.  
 Look how the living pulse of Allah beats  
 Thro' all His world, if every single star  
 Should shriek its claim; 'I only am in heaven'  
 Why that were such sphere-music as the Greek  
 Had hardly dreamed of. There is light in all,  
 And light, with more or less of shade in all.  
 I hate the rancour of their castes and creeds,  
 I let them worship as they will, I reap  
 No revenue from the field of unbelief,  
 I cull from every faith and race the best  
 And bravest soul of counsellor and friend.  
 The Christians own a spiritual Head  
 And following thy true counsel by thine aid,  
 Myself am such in our Islam, for no  
 Mirage of glory, but for power to fuse  
 My myriads into union under one;  
 To hunt the tiger of oppression out  
 From office; and to spread the Divine Faith

Like calming oil on all their stormy creeds,  
And fill the hollows between wave and wave;  
To nurse my children on the Milk of Truth,  
And alchemise old hates into the gold  
Of love, and make it current; and beat back  
The menacing poison of intolerant priests,  
Those cobras ever setting up their hoods—  
One Allah : One Khalifa."

Akbar's greatness rests not merely on his policy of religious tolerance but also on his establishment of a formative framework of administration, which functioned with extraordinary vigour and smoothness for nearly 250 years. He is not merely champion of a new-found philosophical freedom, he is also a son of the Renaissance, and the herald of religious freedom. He created that new spiritual atmosphere of culture and intellectual freedom which have been India's chief contribution to the modern world. Indians throughout this golden period of history took a lead in art, scholarship and in the mediation between the antique culture and the modern spirit. The fifteenth century in India had closed to a solemn symphony. India lay trampled on and dying. Akbar poured oxygen into her diseased lungs, and injected powerful currents of vitality. He wrought for the modern world a real resurrection of Indian energy, which, since the destruction of her ancient culture, and the decline of her power and status under a succession of weak Muslim and Hindu princes had lain swathed up in hair shirts within the tomb of medieval cloisters. The force to judge and the desire to create and reform were generated. The thralldom of unproved tradition was abolished, and the country was thereby enabled to assimilate the political and social implications of the new reforms in administration which had been carefully thought out by the wisdom and energy of our king. The religious implications of the king's policy were not developed; as many persons found that the king had flown to the other extreme, and had not taken the temper and traditions of the people and the country into account. In religion Akbar was far in advance of his age, and the people were not prepared to accept a new creed

even at the dictation of an emperor. The abrupt secession of Akbar's personal followers from the customs and religious rites of their contemporaries produced agonies of doubt and anxiety in the mind of the orthodox, who were horrified by the innovations of the king, and offered determined opposition to his reforms. It must be admitted that his new creed, *Din-Ilahi*, had no root in the soil of India and after the death of the beloved ruler it became a subject of merriment. The Emperor's reforming activity had found full vent in the details of administration and in the organisation of his numerous campaigns. He found that it was infinitely harder to effect a change in the spiritual beliefs of the people than in their daily uses and wisely moderated his iconoclastic ardour, so that he might give more time and energy to the material condition of his vast empire. He never gave up his religious quest, but his good sense, the sense of one born to rule men, showed him that he could not force the pace in the spiritual domain, and though he succeeded in effecting a synthesis of culture and laying the foundations of Hindu-Muslim unity, he failed, and was bound to fail, in his endeavour to fuse the two religions of India into a unity. Akbar's reign laid the foundation for stable administration, and the ruler reformed almost every department of his complex machinery. Revenue administration was overhauled and, the army was reorganised, and became a most efficient instrument of national policy. Rules were framed for district administration, for justice, police and trade, and India's foreign policy was clearly formulated. As a matter of fact our frontier Pathans and Rajput princes supplied some of the most brilliant generals and statesmen of the Mughal period. Afghanistan was ruled efficiently by India for nearly 150 years, and Mughal emperors often spent their summer at Kabul. Religious toleration may be regarded as the first-born of the spirit of the modern world. Instinctively India has perceived that in Akbar's policy is involved the principle of security for conviction which is the very core of her existence as a nation. Reason in India was now applied to the administrative problems of the land, and Akbar's successor developed his leading principles and applied them to every aspect of national activity. The

Mughal Government which had been imposed by foreigners, soon became a national government, and it enlisted the sympathy and won the confidence of every class of its subjects. I cannot deal here with the growth of Indian culture, or the development of cultural unity which were the results of the great ruler's policy. The end of the great emperor's life consecrated the principles of duty to God, and service to his country which had animated its whole course. All the sources of India's greatness were grasped in their diversity by his wise statesmanship and animated with his intellect, and were worked into a pattern of our national genius, which forms a truly fascinating whole.

*Jehangir's Patronage of Art and Culture.* His son Emperor Jehangir, was a lovable man, and was a great patron of art and culture. Jehangir was a great connoisseur of painting, and encouraged many able painters in India. He says in his *Memoirs*, "As regards myself, my liking for painting and my practice in judging it, have arrived at such a point that when any work is brought before me either of deceased artists or of the present day, without the names being told, I say on the spur of the moment that it is the work of such and such a man. And if there be a picture containing many portraits and each face be the work of a different master, I can discover which work is the work of each. If any other person has put in the eye and eyebrows of a face, I can perceive whose work the original face is and who has painted eyes and eyebrows." India had a vigorous school of painting long before the coming of the Mughals, and Akbar applied his principle of Hindu-Muslim unity by encouraging Hindu and Muslim artists to collaborate. The great painter, Ichangu, improved his technique by introducing his painters to the masterpieces of Italian painting. There is evidence to believe that Rembrandt was influenced by Mughal paintings. The collaboration of Italian genius, with Indian skill, inaugurated a new era in the history of art. Indian painters were introduced for the first time to the glories of Italian art. One can imagine the powerful effect which an Italian masterpiece, such as Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, must have produced on the mind and heart of brilliant

Indian artists. The isolation of the supreme figure, its royal inclined head mystical within its own clear triumphal arch of sorrow, against the tender sky, the opposed isolation of darkness around the arch-traitor, Judas Iscariot and the cool mysterious tones of Leonardo's colour wrung from vanishing rainbows and stainless afterglows—all these and other features of this work of supreme beauty must have wrought a revolution on the ideals and technique of Indian painters. The effect of this synthesis is to be seen in the perfect craftsmanship of Indian painters in Jehangir's time. Indian painting reached its zenith in his reign and his two chief painters were Master Mansur and Abul Hasan who were called the wonders of the age. Sir Thomas Roe, the British ambassador at Jehangir's court, was astonished when these great artists gave him a perfect copy of a miniature, and he failed to distinguish the original from the copy. Jehangir like his father loved religious debates between Christians and Muslims, and was distinguished for his love of justice and toleration. Nobody was persecuted in his reign for his religious beliefs. His love of justice was proverbial. "God forbid," he said, "that I should consider princes, far less noblemen," in dispensing justice, and another saying of his is that "a king has no relations." The sale of intoxicating drugs was stopped, and barbarous customs were prohibited. He insisted on paying compensation for damage done by troops on the march, and when a famine broke out in a part of India, he tried to alleviate their lot by free kitchen and remission of revenue. No execution could take place till sunset, in order to give time for the arrival of reprieve. Jehangir was not an active ruler, but he was good natured, tolerant, and loved justice. On the whole a lovable man, with a highly developed individuality, a profound regard for religious toleration, and a stern sense of justice.

*Mughal Culture at its zenith under Shah Jehan.* The Mughal Empire reached its zenith in the time of Shah Jehan, the builder of the Taj Mahal of Agra, and one of the greatest patrons of art in India. It was an age of grandeur which India had never witnessed and in his time the Mughal State became truly a Culture State. His administration was just



and beneficent, and the French traveller, Tavernier, who travelled in India in that period, declared, "This great monarch reigned more than thirty years, less as a king over his subjects than as a father of family over his house and children." Elphinstone describes his reign as the most prosperous ever known in India. In Shah Jehan's time, India was prosperous, the people were happy and contented, and the great emperor, who was dowered by nature with an exquisite taste, was universally loved. Shah Jehan started his career in the army with his brilliant military feat against the fortress of Chitor. The history of Jehangir's reign is mainly a record of the brilliant victories won by this prince. His charming manners, stern rules of conduct, devotion to duty, and superb courage made him one of the most popular rulers of our country. Shah Jehan's generalship was superb, and his statesmanship, when a prince, was no less brilliant. He combined the qualities of an inspiring leader on the battlefield, with the suppleness, flexibility and resource of a great statesman. It is impossible for me to analyse Shah Jehan's personality, and discuss the details of his administration within the compass of this chapter. Like all Mughal emperors, he had an instinct for administration, and foreign travellers have given glowing accounts of the peace and prosperity of our cities and villages in his reign. It was in his reign that the Indian people, who had enjoyed one hundred years of tranquillity and national government, realised themselves in the sphere of culture and fine arts, and found their greatest patron in the scholarly ruler. India's prosperity and grandeur in the spacious days of Shah Jehan aroused the admiration of all European travellers—French, English, Dutch and Portuguese of this period. I quote the following from Rai Bhar Mal, in his history *Lubb-ul-Tawarikh*, "The means employed by the King (Shah Jehan) in these happy times to protect and nourish his people, his knowledge of what made for their welfare, his administration by honest and intelligent officers, the auditing of accounts, his care of the crown-lands and their tenants, encouragement of agriculture and the collection of revenue, together with his punishment of evil-doers and tyrants, all tended to the prosperity of the country. The subdivision which had

brought in three lakhs in Akbar's reign now yielded ten, though some fell short and those who increased the revenue by careful agriculture were rewarded." I think it will be correct to state with Elphinstone, that "Shah Jehan's reign was the most prosperous ever known in India, together with a large share of good government that often falls to the lot of few Asiatic nations." He was, according to one writer, the most magnificent prince that ever appeared in India. His retinue, state establishments, largesses and the gorgeous court ceremonials, made the court of Delhi one of the most magnificent in Asia. An Indian historian states that it was owing to the great solicitude evinced by His Majesty towards the promotion of the national weal and general tranquillity that the people were restrained from committing offences against one another and breaking peace. Notwithstanding the great area of this country, complaints were few, and one day in the week, Wednesday, was fixed upon for consideration of justice, and it was even then rare that twenty plaintiffs could be found to prefer suits, the number generally being less. Shah Jehan would sometimes chide the keeper of court that although so many confidential persons had been appointed to lodge complaints, and a day of the week was set apart with a view to dispensing justice, yet even the small number of twenty plaintiffs could but seldom be brought into court. Moreland, an authority on the period, has pointed out that the reign of Shah Jehan, was a period of agrarian tranquillity and India's prosperity under this emperor was due to his careful administration.

What Jehangir did in painting, Shah Jehan achieved in marble. Everyone has heard of the *Taj Mahal*, and everyone knows that it is an expression of the great ruler's devotion to his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Fergusson, the great historian of Eastern architecture, thus described the *Taj*, "It is the combination of so many beauties, and the perfect manner in which one is subordinate to the other that makes up the whole which the world cannot match, and which never fails to impress even those who are most indifferent to the effects produced by the architectural objects in general." The tribute of another expert on architecture

may also be quoted. He says that "it is a living thing with all the attributes of perfect womanhood, more subtle, romantic, tender in its beauty than any other building of its kind." The *Taj* was built on a plot of land purchased from a famous Rajput chief, Raja Jai Singh, grandson of the famous Man Singh, Governor of Kabul, south of Agra city at a cost of 9 crores and 17 lakhs of rupees. It was begun in 1632, and completed in January, 1653. We have a number of contemporary historians who have given details of its construction. Another building of Shah Jehan which is not so well known is the Moti Masjid, the Pearl Mosque of Agra, which took seven years to complete. There is something more intense in the mystic impression of those denticulated arches, those white and blue perspectives, than in the flight of Gothic perpendiculars. The serenity of a Greek temple has not that passion purified in beauty. "It is a sanctuary in which a mysterious soul throbs between bliss and ecstasy." The most entrancing view of the lovely *Taj Mahal* is to be had on a tranquil night when the full moon floats overhead, lighting up the tomb with an ethereal glow and the mausoleum is mirrored in the calm surface of the river Jumna. The closer one examines the *Taj*, the more one admires it. The minutest detail has been carefully thought out and executed with tireless patience. In inscribing texts from the *Quran* round the tall doorways the artists have shown themselves such masters of perspective that the letters 30 feet or more above the line of the eye appear to be of exactly the same size as those at foot from the ground. The mosaic work is done with onyx, jasper, korelian, carbuncle, malachite, lapis lazuli and other precious stones. I will finally quote the following glowing account by Gladstone Solomon, former principal of the Bombay School of Arts : "It matters not that it was the autocrat Shah Jehan who built the *Taj*. From the moment of the first inception of the idea its beauty haunted the mind of the great Mughal; the *Taj* became the property of the world. Shah Jehan was in this a greater socialist than the most radical of our reformers. He believed in the community of art, so that the unending message of the *Taj* is still being unfolded." Shah Jehan removed

his capital from Agra to Delhi, which he called *Shahjahanabad*. In Delhi, too, Shah Jehan kept up his love of beautiful buildings, and built the Delhi Fort in April 1639. The entire walls of the fort are built of red sandstone, in shape it is an irregular octagon with its two long sides on the east and west, and six smaller ones on the north and south. The Fort has some beautiful buildings but the most striking of all is the *Diwan-i-Khas*, or the Hall of Private Audience. It was also known as the *Shah Mahal*. Fergusson, an authority on the subject, is of the opinion that "if not the most beautiful it is certainly the most highly ornamented of all Shah Jehan's buildings." There is besides the *Jami Masjid*, or the Great Mosque of Delhi, which was built in 1650 and its construction employed five thousand men daily for six years. I have given only a brief account of the exquisite works of this great ruler and it is impossible for me to detail the large number of mosques, palaces and forts which Shah Jehan designed and executed. The emperor had probably one of the finest collections of diamonds and precious stones in the world. A writer gives the following account of the famous *Peacock Throne* of the great Mughal: "The underside of the great canopy is covered with diamonds and pearls, with a fringe of pearls all round and above the canopy, which is a quadrangular shaped dome, there is seen to be a peacock with elevated tail made of blue sapphires and other coloured stones, having a large ruby in front of the breast, from whence hangs a pear-shaped pearl of 50 carats or thereabouts and is somewhat yellow in colour." One writer estimated its cost at 1,070 lakhs of rupees, while Bernier calculated it at four crores. Another traveller estimated it at rupees, 20,000,000 in gold, though he admitted that a true estimate could only be arrived at by a careful examination of precious stones.

Shah Jehan's patronage extended to other arts, and he was a discriminating patron of literature, painting and music. His reign witnessed the development of Persian and Hindi language and literature, and Indian music, and the emperor encouraged music and literature with loving care. He spoke Hindi, was fond of Hindi music, and encouraged Hindi

poetry. Many Hindi poets adorned his court. His taste in music was exquisite and the emperor frequently listened to the selected songs of Hindi musicians. Music, painting, dancing, astronomy, mathematics and medicine, all flourished in his time. He continued the translation of Sanskrit works which had been started by Akbar. A number of works on algebra, mensuration and arithmetic were composed in the emperor's regime.

### **Mughal Culture, a Synthesis of Hindu-Muslim Ideas**

The example of Shah Jahan's love of art showed how Mughal genius expressed itself in the realm of fine arts and administration. Mughal culture was the synthesis of Hindu-Muslim culture. According to a great biologist, Dr. Julian Huxley, progress in human evolution has been mainly dependent on the most universal things, such as shared values and shared knowledge, and has been most rapid when separate streams of culture have mingled and fertilised each other. Progress has resulted mainly from shared ideas and co-operation, rather than on egotism and ruthless competition, whether among individuals or among groups. Mughal culture became supreme in northern India because of this co-operation and synthesis. The Mughals' noblest contribution was the stability, security and unity which they gave to India at a time when Europe was undergoing the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, and religious toleration was non-existent except in the Dutch Republic. While the inquisition in Spain was levying its dreadful toll and subjecting heretics to tortures of the most refined kind, a long line of Mughals were unfolding a policy of religious toleration and benevolent administration which were a landmark in the growth of freedom. Akbar and his successors had divined the momentous issues of spiritual freedom, as they knew that in a country like India, motives of the medieval past were exhausted, and they were suspicious of the religious fanatics, who were extravagantly harsh in dogmatic mysteries and ecclesiastical parade of power. The Mughals had the instinct for a spiritual and political regeneration and they had the breadth of philosophic insight and the sagacity of a frank and independent nature. We find in the



Mughal emperors up to the end of the seventeenth century, learning and the patronage of the arts, consummate skill in administration, the passion for magnificence and the refinements of polite culture. In its later stages, in the eighteenth century, there was deterioration of character, followed by a rapid decline of the Empire. The political anarchy of the eighteenth century produced so many changes that moral distinctions were obliterated and India heaved like a huge ocean in the grip of tumultuous gyrating cyclone. There was inevitably a disintegration of her political structure, and a carnival of liberated energies. It is true that the period produced some brilliant generals and statesmen, but the richer vein of Mughal culture and administration had been worked out. The untimely frost cast by this disintegration on India's budding boughs of knowledge had its effect in scholarship, music, poetry and architecture. They had borne their fruits, and were nipped in their unfolding season by the confusion and anarchy of that century. Yet the mind of India has been profoundly penetrated and permeated by Mughal culture which has sustained the cultural life of our dear country for four centuries.

*Characteristics of Mughal Culture.* Having dealt with the contribution of Mughal culture, which I repeat, was really a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim cultures, let me summarise its main characteristics. The distinctive contribution of Mughal culture to the growth of modern India consists in the broad commonsense, the mental soundness, the humane instinct and sympathy with nature which give fertility and wholeness to some of the most brilliant Mughal historians. In the sphere of administration, they were ruthlessly efficient, and the institutions of modern India, which have been adapted to the needs of modern times are intrinsically Mughal. Sir Jadunath Sarkar observes, "The two hundred years of Mughal rule gave to the whole of northern India and to much of the Deccan also, oneness of official language, administrative system and coinage, and also a popular *lingua franca* for all classes except the Hindu priests and the stationary village folk. Even outside the territory directly administered by the Mughal emperors,



their administrative system, official titles, court etiquette and monetary type were borrowed, more or less, by the neighbouring Hindu rajahs. Another important result was the uniformity of administrative machinery in the twenty provinces of Mughal India and the establishment of provincial and district administrations on uniform principles throughout the land. This made for the cultural synthesis and social cohesion of India. The personality of the Mughals endures in thousands of forms in the India of to-day, and every Indian in northern India loves to dwell on the court of Akbar, his devotion to Abul Fazl, his jests with Raja Bir Bal, and his consummate generalship. Whereas the people of Kabul and homeland of the Mughals had remained in a state of destitution and illiteracy, the people of India enjoyed centuries of wealth and civilisation in great cities. Indian towns aroused the admiration of foreign travellers and were centres of vigorous social and intellectual life. The aristocracy was haughty and proud, devoted alike to martial pursuits and scholarship, and spent its superfluous income on the patronage of fine arts. It was both indifferent to opinion and self-conscious in a high degree. In the eighteenth century, instead of serving the state, it engaged itself in intrigue, and though it was highly intellectualised and was penetrated with culture, it had not advanced to the self-control of a patriotic sentiment, was hampered by the corruption which flowed irresistibly from the disorder of the period, was tainted by uncritical contact with foreign adventurers and ruthless invaders from the north and south, and finally was emasculated by political despotism and palace intrigues. Their vices appeared to be worse because they attacked the imagination instead of exercising the senses. In its palmy days, however, Mughal society was distinguished by a sobriety of appetite, a courtesy of behaviour, a perfection of etiquette which became the model for the whole of India, a widely diffused refinement of manners, a liberal spirit of religious toleration, and a patronage of fine arts and scholarship which were without a parallel in Asia of that period. In dress, speech, etiquette, thought, literature, music, painting, calligraphy, food and gardens, the Mughal rulers showed great

capacity for leadership, and they fostered cultural aspirations of their people, and cultivated exquisite taste. They were specially fond of gardens and fruits, and numerous works have been published on the Mughal gardens in Kashmir and the Punjab, in Delhi and Agra. One has only to go to Lahore, Kashmir and other places to realise the cool mysterious tones, the dreamy exalted landscape, and the woven peace of the avenues of tall poplars. The first Mughal ruler, Babar, gives us an interesting account of the flowers and fruits of India and compares them with the delicious flora of his native town. The Mughal emperors loved the Kashmir valley, where peach and apple and other fruits too numerous to mention, paled and flushed and kindled on their branches. Among the foothills of this lovely valley Jehangir sailed with delight on the numerous enchanted lakes sunk in their luminous airs, with their sweet tradition of mysterious caves, their pleasant meadows and smiling people. We get a graphic account in the travels of the Frenchman, Bernier, who travelled with his patron in the happy valley. On the manners, etiquette, food and dress of India, the Mughals produced a deep impression. The dress used by Indians in northern India is practically the same as that in use in the Mughal period. The etiquette, forms of addresses and manners were evolved by Mughal courtiers and aristocrats and have been retained, with some modifications, to the present day. The musical instruments in which Mughal lords and ladies delighted are still the same. Indian painting has been deeply influenced by Mughal painters. The literature of Hindustan, *viz.* northern India, is derived largely from the classical period of the Mughals, while the influence of Mughal architecture has been profound. Sir John Marshall, one of the greatest authorities on the subject, has remarked, "Seldom in the history of mankind has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilisations, so vast and so strongly developed yet so radically dissimilar as the Mussalman and Hindu, meeting and mingling together. The very contrast which existed between them, the wide divergence in their religions and culture, make the history of this impact peculiarly instructive and lend an added interest to the art, and above all, to the architecture which their united genius called into being." It is no

exaggeration to say that the Indian people between the age of Babar and Shah Jehan, were intellectually and socially remade. India felt the influence of the new synthesis, while she was absorbing it with obstinate jealousy, and the Indian people assimilated the several elements that mingled with it. It may indeed be said that the Indian people produced hosts of statesmen, generals, scholars and artists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who were capable of solving their own moral contradictions by virile effort, if India had been allowed to mould her destiny, and maintain her freedom in consonance with her national genius. But this freedom from interference, the good fortune of being left alone, was precisely what India unfortunately never secured.



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